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# KEY TO THE STUDY OF GAELIC.

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## LESSON I.

### THE ALPHABET.

THE GAELIC ALPHABET is composed of seventeen letters, which, with their sounds and equivalents, are as follow :—

| CAPS | SMALL | SOUND |
|------|-------|-------|
| A    | a     | aw    |
| B    | b     | bay   |
| C    | c     | kay   |
| D    | d     | dhay  |
| E    | e     | ay    |
| F    | f     | eff   |
| G    | g     | gay   |
| I    | i     | ee    |
| L    | l     | ell   |
| M    | m     | emm   |
| N    | n     | enn   |
| O    | o     | oh    |
| P    | p     | pay   |
| R    | r     | arr   |
| S    | s     | ess   |
| T    | t     | thay  |
| U    | u     | oo    |

The letter *h*, strange to say, is not reckoned as a letter of the Gaelic alphabet, although its aspirate sound is prevalent in the language, and the letter itself very extensively used in writing. It is employed in the following connections.

1. To prevent a *hiatus* between two vowels; as *na h-aingil*, the angels; *na h-éigse*, the poets. In this position it is separated by a hyphen, to show that it forms no part of the following word.

2. To affect or change the radical sound of a consonant. This power of *h* is well illustrated in English. Take, for example, the sound of *c* in *curl*, compare it with the sound of *c* in *churl*, and mark the difference. The sound of *s* in *sock* is not identical with the sound of *s* in *shock*. The sound of *p* in *pant* differs from the sound of *p* in *phantom*; and the sound of *g* in *rug* differs from the sound of *g* in *rough*, etc. This influence of *h* upon a consonant is called “aspiration.” There are in Gaelic nine consonants — *b, c, d, f, g, m, p, s, t*,—each of which is susceptible of having its radical sound aspirated by the influence of an *h* placed immediately after it. But it must be borne in mind that the effect of *h* upon any particular consonant in Gaelic is not always identical with the effect of *h* upon the same consonant in English.

The letter *h* is never used as an independent consonant in Gaelic. Even in English where it is so used, it can be shown to be only the corrupt form of another consonant.

#### THE LETTERS—THEIR DIVISION AND CLASSIFICATION.

The letters of the alphabet are divided into two classes known as vowels and consonants. The vowels are five in number; namely, *a, o, u, e, i*. There are twelve consonants; viz., *b, c, d, f, g, i, m, n, p, r, s, t*.

## THE VOWELS AND THEIR SOUNDS.

A vowel is a pure vocal sound; and as a sound of the voice may be either long or short, every one of the five vowels, therefore, has two sounds; viz., the *long* sound and the *short* sound. When a vowel is long it is generally distinguished by having an acute accent mark (') placed over it, thus á, ó, ú, é, í. When no such accent mark is placed over a vowel it is understood to be short in sound.

### SOUNDS OF THE VOWELS WHEN LONG.

|          |             |           |    |                |           |        |
|----------|-------------|-----------|----|----------------|-----------|--------|
| á (long) | sounds like | <i>a</i>  | in | <i>fall</i> ;  | as “bás,” | death. |
| ó        | “           | <i>o</i>  | “  | <i>old</i> ;   | as “mór,” | great. |
| ú        | “           | <i>u</i>  | “  | <i>rule</i> ;  | as “úr,”  | fresh. |
| é        | “           | <i>e</i>  | “  | <i>where</i> ; | as “cré,” | clay.  |
| í        | “           | <i>ee</i> | “  | <i>green</i> ; | as “mín,” | fine.  |

### SOUNDS OF THE VOWELS WHEN SHORT.

|           |             |          |    |                 |            |        |
|-----------|-------------|----------|----|-----------------|------------|--------|
| a (short) | sounds like | <i>a</i> | in | <i>bat</i> ;    | as “gas,”  | stalk. |
| o         | “           | <i>o</i> | “  | <i>mother</i> ; | as “cos,”  | foot.  |
| u         | “           | <i>u</i> | “  | <i>full</i> ;   | as “tur,”  | raw.   |
| e         | “           | <i>e</i> | “  | <i>met</i> ;    | as “ceil,” | deny.  |
| i         | “           | <i>i</i> | “  | <i>bit</i> ;    | as “mil,”  | honey. |

### TWO CLASSES OF VOWELS.

The five vowels (whether long or short) are divided into two classes, known as *broad* vowels and *slender* vowels. The broad vowels are a, o, u. The slender vowels are e, i.

## THE CONSONANTS AND THEIR SOUNDS.

A consonant is distinguishable from a vowel in this respect: that a vowel is a pure, independent sound of the voice, and a consonant does not admit of being



uttered without the aid of a vowel. A consonant by itself has no sound properly so called, but it always derives *its* sound from the vowel with which it is written. The very meaning of the name (from the Latin *con*, with or together and *sonus*, a sound) shows this. Its office is to be sounded with, or offer a certain kind of resistance to, the vowel sound, thus forming a pleasing articulation or sort of stepping-stone for the organs of speech.

The consonant being thus dependent upon the vowel for its own sound, gives rise to two distinct sounds of the consonant itself, corresponding to the two classes of vowels termed broad and slender. Thus when a consonant is written with any of the broad vowels, a, o, u, it will have a *broad* sound, and when written with either of the slender vowels, e, i, it will have a *slender* sound. In this manner each consonant has two distinct sounds; viz., the BROAD SOUND and the SLENDER SOUND, according as it is written with a broad or a slender vowel.

The difference between the broad and slender sound of any consonant is very slight, but it forms an important factor in the orthography of the language. This difference may be easily noticed by taking each one of the consonants and pronouncing it, first in conjunction with the three broad vowels, a, o, u, and next with the slender vowels, e, i, in the following order:—

| BROAD.   | SLENDER. | BROAD.   | SLENDER. |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| bá bó bú | bé bí    | má mó mú | mé mí    |
| cá có cú | cé cí    | ná nó nú | né ní    |
| dá dó dú | dé dí    | pá pó pú | pé pí    |
| fá fó fú | fé fí    | rá ró rú | ré rí    |
| gá gó gú | gé gí    | sá só sú | sé sí    |
| lá ló lú | lé lí    | tá tó tú | té tí    |



This influence of the vowel upon the consonant is perceptible to a certain extent in every language, but scarcely any language exists in which the distinction between broad and slender is so marked and perfect as in Gaelic. In English the vowels *e* and *i* have a special effect upon some of the consonants; as, for instance, the sound of *c* in *curtain* is quite different from the sound of *c* in *certain*: the one being “hard,” like *k*, and the other “soft,” like *s*; and the sound of *g* in *log* differs from the sound of *g* in *logic*: the one being termed “hard” and the other “soft,” like *j*. This complete change of the sound of *c* and *g* in English is due to the influence of the slender vowels *e* and *i* following them. In Gaelic, however, though every consonant has a decided slender sound as distinguished from its broad sound, no consonant changes its sound to that of another (as the *c* and *g* sometimes do in English): but, on the contrary, every consonant retains its individual characteristic in passing from broad to slender. Of all the consonants the letter *s* shows the most marked difference between its broad and slender sound, being sounded like *s* in *soon* when broad and like *sh* in *ship* when slender.

#### THE CONSONANT SOUNDS ILLUSTRATED.

B, broad, sounds like *b* in *bull*; as “bó,” a cow.

B, slender, sounds like *b* in *bit*; as “béim,” a wound.

The broad sound of *b* is produced by the lips being slightly protruded, while in giving it the slender sound the lips are to be contracted.

C, broad, sounds like *c* in *call*; as “cás,” a case.

C, slender, sounds like *k* in *kindred*; as “cír,” a comb.

The broad sound of *c* is produced by the root of the tongue closing against the epiglottis, and the slender sound by pressing the middle part of the tongue against the back part of the palate.

D, broad, sounds like *th* in *without*; as “dán,” a poem.

D, slender, sounds like *d* in *din*; as “déin,” do.

The broad sound of *d* is got by placing the tip of the tongue at the root of the upper front teeth, and laying it partly flat against the palate. The slender sound is obtained by relaxing the tongue from the position indicated and placing the tip thereof against the palate, a little space away from the root of the teeth.

F, broad, sounds like *f* in *fall*; as “fás,” growth.

F, slender, sounds like *f* in *fine*; as “fine,” a tribe.

The broad sound of *f* is obtained by slightly protruding the under lip and bringing it in contact with the upper front teeth. The slender sound is got by contracting the under lip and pressing it against the upper front teeth.

G, broad, sounds like *g* in *goal*; as “gó,” a lie.

G, slender, sounds like *g* in *begin*; as “gé,” a goose.

The broad and slender sound of *g* are obtained by placing the organs in the same position as in articulating the letter *c* broad and slender.

L, broad, sounds broader than *l* in *law*; as “lán,” full.

L, slender, is more liquid than *l* in *valiant*; as “léim,” leap.

We get the *l* sound, broad and slender, by placing the tongue in nearly the same position as in articulating the *d*.

M, broad, sounds like *m* in *most*; as “mór,” great.

M, slender, sounds like *m* in *mint*; as “mil,” honey.

The broad and slender sound of *m* are got by protruding and contracting the lips as in uttering the letter *b*.

N, broad, is broader than *n* in *no*; as “nós,” a custom.

N, slender, is more slender than *n* in *news*; as “ní,” not.

The sounds of *n* are obtained by putting the tongue in the same position as in articulating the *d* or *l*.

P, broad, sounds like *p* in *poor*; as “pórt,” a harbor.

P, slender, sounds like *p* in *pure*; as “pic,” a peck.

The letter *p* being a labial, its sounds are produced by protruding and contracting the lips as in articulating the letter *b* or *m* broad and slender.

R, broad, sounds like *r* in *car*; as “mór,” great,

R, slender, sounds like *r* in *care*; as “cír,” a comb.

The difference in the positions of the tongue in uttering the letter *r* broad and slender is very slight, and cannot be well defined.

S, broad, sounds like *s* in *soon*; as “sórt,” a sort.

S, slender, sounds like *sh* in *she*; as “sé,” he.

This consonant needs no explanation. It is always a hissing sibilant. The old Gaelic grammarians called it the “queen of consonants.”

T, broad, sounds like *th* in *rhythm*; as “túr,” a tower.

T, slender, sounds like *t* in *tin*; as “teist,” a testimony.

The broad and slender sound of *t* are produced by placing the tongue in the same position as in sounding *d*, *l*, *n*, broad and slender.

The exemplification of the sounds of the letters given above (that part devoted to the consonants at least) is not to be exclusively relied upon. The English speaker can discern no difference between the broad and slender *b*, *d*, *f*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *p*, *r*, *t*; neither will the indicating of the position of the organs be any use to him in determining the sounds of these letters in Gaelic. The sounds of these letters must consequently be learned *by ear*, from a good Gaelic speaker. And when the learner has once acquired the sounds of the letters in this way, he will find no difficulty in pronouncing words, for *letters* are the component parts of *words*.

## VOCABULARY.

The following vocabulary, composed of words of one syllable, shows the vowels in conjunction with consonants forming words, and exhibits the broad and slender sounds of the consonants together with the long and short sounds of the vowels. In the left hand column the vowels are all long ; in the opposite right hand column they are all short.

## A

cás, *a case.*

bás, *death.*

bán, *white.*

árd, *high.*

bád, *a boat.*

lán, *full.*

bárd, *a bard.*

dán, *a poem.*

cas, *twisted.*

bas, *palm of hand.*

glan, *clean.*

cat, *a cat.*

brat, *a mantle.*

lag, *weak.*

gas, *a stalk.*

glas, *green ; chilly.*

## O

pórt, *a harbor.*

brón, *grief.*

rós, *a rose.*

mór, *great.*

óg, *young.*

bórd, *a table.*

nós, *a custom.*

póg, *a kiss.*

port, *a tune.*

gort, *a garden.*

olc, *bad.*

bog, *soft.*

folt, *fillet.*

dos, *a bush.*

cross, *a cross.*

cos, *a foot.*

## U

úr, *fresh ; novel.*

clú, *fame.*

cúl, *poll.*

dún, *a fort.*

lúb, *loop.*

rún, *a secret.*

pus, *a lip.*

bun, *bottom.*

rud, *a thing.*

gus, *energy.*

lus, *an herb.*

sult, *mirth.*

E

|                        |                            |
|------------------------|----------------------------|
| spéir, <i>sky.</i>     | speir, <i>a ham.</i>       |
| géis, <i>a swan.</i>   | teist, <i>a testimony.</i> |
| gé, <i>a goose.</i>    | ceist, <i>a question.</i>  |
| féis, <i>festival.</i> | geir, <i>tallow.</i>       |
| glé, <i>pure.</i>      | geilt, <i>a lunatic.</i>   |
| spré, <i>a dowry.</i>  | seilg, <i>a chase.</i>     |
| léim, <i>a leap.</i>   | sgeilg, <i>a rock.</i>     |

I

|                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| mín, <i>minute.</i>    | min, <i>meal.</i>     |
| mí, <i>a month.</i>    | mis, <i>a maiden.</i> |
| spín, <i>a thorn.</i>  | glic, <i>cunning.</i> |
| tír, <i>a land.</i>    | tim, <i>timid.</i>    |
| lí, <i>color.</i>      | slis, <i>a lath.</i>  |
| clí, <i>the chest.</i> | lil, <i>a lily.</i>   |
| ím, <i>butter.</i>     | dris, <i>a brier.</i> |

In that part of the above vocabulary under the vowel e, it will be noticed that in some words, instead of the single vowel e, we have the digraph ei. This accompanying vowel (i) is inserted because the vowel e can never stand alone in a syllable, except when it ends a word; as “glé,” “spré,” etc. Whenever it is followed by a consonant it must take the slender vowel i if the following consonant be slender, and the broad vowel u (or a) if the following consonant be broad; as “féis,” a festival; “beus,” (or “béas,”) a habit. From this it will be seen that the vowel e has no influence over the consonant that follows it in determining the broad or slender sound thereof; hence it is that it must always take the adventitious vowel i or u after it in a syllable, which vowel is never heard in the pronunciation, being inserted only to preserve the sound of the consonant after e.



## DOUBLE CONSONANTS AND VOWEL CHANGES.

When a double consonant—ll, nn, rr, or m (which in old Gaelic was doubled in monosyllables)—stands at the end of a monosyllabic word, the preceding vowel is lengthened in sound or otherwise changed in quality; as “barr,” top, *pronounced bawr*; “mall,” slow, *pron. mawl*; “clann,” children, *pron. klawn*; “trom,” heavy, *pron. throam*; “cill,” a church, *pron. keel*. This is the analogical pronunciation, but between the dialect of Munster and Connacht there is the following difference.

In Munster the vowel a or o coming before ll, nn, m, ng in monosyllables, and nc, nl, nr, nt in dissyllables, is corrupted into a diphthongal sound, like *ow* in *how*; as “dall,” blind, *pron. dhowl*; “clann,” children, *pron. klown*; “trom,” heavy, *pron. throwm*.

In Connacht, though the vowel a gets its proper long sound in these positions, the o or i is never long before the forementioned double consonants.

The following list of monosyllables ending in a double consonant or in m, illustrates every instance of vowel change to perfection. The student in pronouncing these words, is expected to follow the custom of his native dialect, while those who are studying Gaelic as a foreign language may adopt the analogical pronunciation.

|                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| mall, <i>slow</i> .                   | poll, <i>a hole</i> .    |
| coll, <i>hazel</i> .                  | lom, <i>bare</i> .       |
| fann, <i>weary</i> .                  | cam, <i>crooked</i> .    |
| clann, <i>children</i> .              | barr, <i>summit</i> .    |
| tonn, <i>a wave</i> .                 | cill, <i>a church</i> .  |
| fonn, <i>diligence, inclination</i> . | bonn, <i>footing</i> .   |
| oorr, <i>thick, clustering</i> .      | binn, <i>melodious</i> . |

In Munster the vowel o before nn, ng in a few words is sounded like *o* in *do*; as “tonn,” a wave, *pron. thoon*; “long,” a ship, *pron. lhoong*.



It should be here noted that when a monosyllable ending in a double consonant has another syllable affixed to it, or, in other words, when it becomes a polysyllable, the double consonant loses its influence over the preceding vowel, which assumes its ordinary short sound; thus “clanna,” “tonna,” “loma,” “binne,” “cille.” In this case the double consonant becomes divided between the two syllables: — “clan-na,” “ton-na,” “bin-ne,” “cil-le,” etc. If the double consonant, however, is followed by another consonant it will retain its influence over the preceding vowel; as “polltha,” “camtha,” “tonntach.”

#### COMBINATIONS OF CONSONANTS.

Two or three consonants coming together in a word without any vowel intervening, constitute what is called a “combination of consonants.” There are some consonants which, when thus combined, do not coalesce, and in the pronunciation a very short vowel sound is heard between them — as that heard between *rm* in the English word *alarm*; between *lm* in *film*, etc. A combination of this kind is easily known by its containing a liquid (*l*, *n*, or *r*), which is the only letter in Gaelic that, from the nature of its abrupt sound, very rarely admits of coalescing with any of the other consonants. The following list of abrupt combinations will illustrate this.

*l* = *lb*, *lc*, *lg*, *lbh*, *lch*, *lm*, *ln* ——— *dl*, *tl*.  
*r* = *rb*, *rc*, *rg*, *rbh*, *rch*, *rm*, *rn* ——— *sr*, *tr*.  
*n* = — — — *nbh*, *nch*, *nm*, — ——— *cn*, *gn*, *mn*, *tn*.

The following list of words, though not exhibiting all the abrupt combinations, will, nevertheless, form a good exercise for pronouncing the most important of them. Every word given herein or elsewhere should, together with its pronunciation, be committed to memory; for the

words set down in this treatise are, indeed, the commonest and most essential in the language, and later on the student will find them employed in a more important function than that of illustrating the sounds of their component parts — the letters.

cnoc, *a hill.*

gnó, *business,*

mná, *women.*

carn, *a cairn.*

sgolb, *a splinter.*

borb, *fierce, haughty.*

bolg, *a sack, belly.*

garg, *rough.*

colm, *a dove.*

gorm, *blue.*

#### ASSIMILATION.

In the combination *dl* and *ln* the *d* and *n* become assimilated with the *l*, which sounds like *ll*; as “*codla*,” sleep, *pron. col-la*; “*áilne*,” beauty, *pron. awl-le*. The *dn* becomes *nn*; as “*ceudna*,” same, *pron. kayn-na*.

The combination *ng* at the end of dissyllabic words is, in parts of Munster and Connacht, pronounced like *nn* when slender and like *gg* when broad; as “*aisling*,” a dream, *pron. ash<sup>h</sup>linn*; “*fairseang*,” wide, *pron. for-shugg*.

The student should bear in mind that both consonants in any combination are sounded alike; *i. e.* both are broad if written with a broad vowel, and slender if written with a slender vowel. The only exception to this rule is the letter *s*, which retains its broad sound before *b*, *p*, *m*, *r*, whether the accompanying vowel be broad or slender; *e. g.* “*spín*,” a thorn, *pron. speen* (not *shpeen*); “*smigín*,” a chin, *pron. smi-geen* (not *shmi-geen*); “*srian*,” a bridle, *pron. sree-an* (not *shree-an*). Some speakers give the *s* its broad sound also before *g*; as “*sgian*,” a knife, “*sgeilg*,” a rock, which are sometimes pronounced *sgee-an*, *sgel-lig*; but *shgee-an*, *shgel-lig* is the proper pronunciation of these words.

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## A FEW RULES OF SYNTAX.

### THE NOUN, ADJECTIVE AND VERB.

**ARTICLE AND NOUN:** The definite article in Gaelic is “an,” which is equivalent to the English *the*. It particularizes or makes definite the noun to which it is prefixed; as “an bád,” *the boat*; “an rós,” *the rose*. When a noun is used without the definite article it is understood to be indefinite; as “bád,” *a boat* (any boat); “rós,” *a rose* (any rose); there being no indefinite article in the Gaelic language; nor, indeed, is there any necessary, because the absence of the definite article is a sure guarantee that the noun is indefinite.

**ADJECTIVE AND NOUN:** An adjective is always placed along with its noun. It is a word usually denoting size or quality, and as such it modifies or qualifies the noun with which it is written. The natural position of the adjective in Gaelic is *after* the noun it qualifies; as “bád mór,” *a boat large*, or, *a large boat*; “port binn,” *a tune melodious*, or, *a melodious tune*.

**VERB AND NOUN:** The verb in Gaelic is put before the noun or subject, and is generally the first word in the sentence; thus, *the dog barks* would be expressed in Gaelic **BARKS THE DOG**; *the orator speaks* would be expressed **SPEAKS THE ORATOR**; “tá an rós,” *the rose is*, literally reads *is the rose*; “tá an bád,” *the boat is*, literally reads *is the boat*, etc.

But the verb “tá,” *is*, does not convey any definite idea in itself, as, for instance, when we say *the rose is*, we impart no particular information, but when we say *the rose is white*, here the adjective, *white*, completes the meaning of the verb *is*, and makes a definite assertion. Such an adjective is called a predicate adjective or *attribute*. The position of the predicate adjective or attribute in Gaelic is

after the noun or subject, and the order of the sentence is: 1, VERB, 2, SUBJECT, 3, PREDICATE ADJECTIVE; thus:

1, *Verb*, 2, *Subject*, 3, *Pred. adj.*

“Tá | an rós | bán,” = *the rose is white.*

“Tá | an bád | lán,” = *the boat is full.*

The learner is to carefully distinguish between the predicate adjective or attribute (used always in connection with some form of the verb meaning *to be*) and the ordinary qualifying adjective, because both these adjectives in Gaelic follow the noun to which they refer: thus:

*Verb*,      *Subject*,      *Pred. adj.*

“Tá | an rós bán | olc,” = *the white rose is bad.*

In this example we perceive that both adjectives follow the noun in the Gaelic sentence, that the first of these is an ordinary qualifying adjective, forming part of the logical subject, and the second a predicate adjective; wherefore the rule is that, no matter how many adjectives may follow a noun or subject, the predicate adjective will always be the last in the sentence. And when two adjectives are predicated of the same noun, they are connected by the conjunction “agus,” *and*; as “tá an rós bán agus úr,” *the rose is white and fresh.*

Another particular to be noted in connection with the verb *to be* in Gaelic is, that it never changes its form except for tense only. In English this verb changes its form not only for tense but for number and person; thus, the verb *is* becomes *am*, *art*, *are*, according as its subject is singular or plural, first, second, or third person; but the verb “tá” never changes in this manner, as may be seen from the following:



Tá mé, *I am.*

Tá sinn, *we are.*

Tá tú, *thou art (you are.)* Tá sibh, *you are (ye are.)*

Tá sé, *he is (it is.)* Tá siad, *they are.*

Tá sí, *she is (it is.)*

### EXERCISE I.

1. Bárd. 2. An bárd. 3. An bárd lag. 4. Bád lán.
5. An bád lán. 6. An bárd agus an dán. 7. Gas glas agus bád lán. 8. Tá an brat bán. 9. Gas lag agus brat bán.
10. Tá an cat bán agus tá an gas glas. 11. Gas árd, glas. 12. Bórd mór. 13. Brón agus bás. 14. Tá an cat óg agus tá an rós bán.
15. Nós olc. 16. Póg agus rós. 17. Tá an gas agus an rós bán. 18. Tá an bád mór agus an pórt lán. 19. Dos glas agus rós bog.
20. Port agus dán, brat agus an bárd. 21. Lus agus gas. 22. Lúb mór. 23. Tá rud bán glan. 24. Rós bán, úr.
25. Tá an cat bán óg. 26. Rud mín, glé. 27. Rós agus lil, póg agus dris. 28. Tá an rós agus an lil mín, agus tá an dris cas.
29. Cat glic. 30. Dris cas agus rós mín, úr. 31. Bun agus barr. 32. Folt borr. 33. An folt borr.
34. Bárd glic, dán binn. 35. Tá an gort lom. 36. Poll mór. 37. Sgeilg árd agus léim olc. 38. Cnoc árd agus an colm. 39. Gnó olc. 40. Cnoc agus carn, clú 'gus dán.
41. Brat gorm. 42. Tá an brat gorm.

### Translation.

1. A bard. 2. The bard. 3. The weak bard. 4. A full boat. 5. The full boat. 6. The bard and the poem.
7. A green stalk and a full boat. 8. The garment is white. 9. A weak stalk and a white garment. 10. The cat is white and the stalk is green. 11. A tall, green stalk. 12. A large table. 13. Grief and death. 14. The cat is young and the rose is white. 15. A bad custom. 16. A kiss and a rose. 17. The stalk and the rose are white. 18. The boat is large and the harbor full.

19. A green bush and *a* soft rose. 20. A tune and *a* poem, *a* mantle and the bard. 21. *An* herb and *a* stalk. 22. A large loop. 23. A white thing is clean. 24. A white, fresh rose. 25. The white cat is young. 26. A fine, bright thing. 27. A rose and *a* lily, *a* kiss and *a* brier. 28. The rose and the lily *are* fine, and the brier is knotty. 29. A cunning cat. 30. A knotty brier and *a* fine, fresh rose. 31. Bottom and top. 32. A clustering tress. 33. The clustering tress. 34. A cunning bard, *a* melodious poem. 35. The field is bare. 36. A large hole. 37. A high rock and *a* bad leap. 38. A high hill and the dove. 39. Bad business. 40. A hill and *a* cairn, fame and *a* poem. 41. A blue garment. 42. The garment is blue.

—:o:—

## LESSON II.

### WORDS OF MORE THAN ONE SYLLABLE.

#### ACCENT.

In pronouncing a word of two or more syllables it will be noticed that one of its syllables is uttered with more emphasis than the others. This emphasis on a particular syllable in a word is called *accent* or *ictus*. There are two methods of accentuating Gaelic words, which characterize respectively the Munster dialect and the Connacht dialect.

#### THE MUNSTER METHOD.

1. Words whose syllables are short have the accent on the second syllable; as “galar’,” “capall’,” “maras’-gal,” “gramas’gar.” If the second syllable occurs between an abrupt combination of consonants it will, nevertheless, take the accent; as “cal m’a,” “bor b’.”



2. A dissyllabic word having both its syllables long takes the accent on the second syllable; as “dólás’” “úrlár’,” “búndún’.”

3. A trisyllabic word having the first and last syllable long (with the short syllable intervening), takes the accent on the first syllable; as “dúr’adán,” “món’adán.”

4. A word which has only one long syllable takes the accent on that syllable, be it first or last; as “cúr’am,” “cís’té,” “cadás’,” “comór’tas,” “amadán’.”

#### THE CONNACHT METHOD.

In the Connacht dialect the accent is always, with few exceptions, placed upon the first syllable of a word; as “gal’ar,” “cap’all,” “gram’asgar,” “cal’ma,” “dól’ás,” “úr’lár,” “dúr’adán,” “món’adán,” “cúr’am,” “cís’té,” “cad’ás,” “com’órtas,” “am’adán.”

The most conspicuous difference between the Munster and Connacht pronunciation lies in the accentuation of those words which contain only one long syllable; as “cadás,” “comórtas,” “amadán.” When the solitary long vowel in such words happens to be in the first syllable, both dialects agree in the accent; as “cúram,” “ciste,” “mála,” “ársa.” But if the long vowel occur in any other than the first syllable, the Connacian will invariably ignore its existence and, to be consistent with his general rule of accentuation, place the *ictus* on the first (short) syllable; as “cad’ás,” “com’órtas,” “am’adán.” This placing of the *ictus* on the short syllable tends to modify, if not absolutely cancel, the quantity of the solitary long vowel. The reason is obvious. In articulating any word a speaker has at his disposal but a limited amount of vocal energy to expend in pronouncing it. If an undue share of this vocal volume is given to the first syllable in pronouncing a word like “amadán” the result

is that when the speaker has reached the final syllable the strength of the voice will have been expended, and that syllable will suffer the loss of its full and broad enunciation. To remedy this evil in our own language the Connacians must adopt a compromise and not cling to the too general rule of always accenting words on the first syllable. In the old Gaelic we have sufficient reason to believe that there was no particular rule regulating the position of the accent either at the beginning or at the end of words: but, on the contrary, it is evident that the position of the accent in a word depended more upon the form of the word itself than upon any arbitrary rule. In the Munster dialect the variation of the accent is very marked; where, for instance, in words like “cadás,” “amadán,” the accent is placed upon the final syllable, while in such words as “dúradán,” “mónadán,” “úghdarás,” it is invariably placed on the first syllable. In this respect the Munster dialect, which seems to be more conservative of ancient forms than any other, bears a striking resemblance to the Greek.

This divergence in practice between the people of Munster and Connacht is not to be understood as a defect peculiar to Gaelic alone. In every language are to be found classes of words, more or less extensive, regarding the pronunciation of which there is a wide difference of opinion, or the accentuation of which has not been determined even by the best authorities. In English, the word *demonstrate* is often accented on the first syllable (*dem'onstrate*), while as often again, and with as much propriety, is it accented on the second syllable (*demon'strate*). To this may be added *alternate*, *decorous*, *ally*, *blasphemous*, and a host of other words which are accented by some persons on the first syllable and by others on the second syllable. Regarding the accentuation of the word *blas*

*phemous*, John Walker, the celebrated English lexicographer, has the following remark:

“We sometimes hear this word pronounced with the accent on the second syllable, like *blaspheme*; and as the word *blasphemus*, in Latin, has the second syllable long, and the English word has the same number of syllables, it has as good a right to the accent on the second syllable as *sonorous*, *bitumen*, *acumen*, etc.; but placing the accent on the first syllable of *blasphemous* is by much the most polite, as, unfortunately for the other pronunciation, though a learned one, it has been adopted by the vulgar.”

It may appear strange, indeed, to many that the English language should betray the same defects which exist in Gaelic. This will seem far more inexplicable when it is considered that the English language has been steadily undergoing a process of cultivation for at least four hundred years, while during that same length of time the ill-fated Gaelic has been banned, proscribed, and relegated to the keeping of a down-trodden, tyrannized peasantry. An intellectual peasantry, indeed, these were, and, as they have been truly styled, “the finest peasantry in Europe,” still when we compare the *spoken* Gaelic of to-day with the standard vernacular of London or New York, we are comparing the language of a peasantry with the language of a pampered, educated aristocracy. To be more just to the peasantry of Ireland, of Celtic origin,—who have happily preserved to us the language and literature of a great past—it will be fitter to compare them with the English classes of their own social standing—the peasantry of England—who, however, enjoy far greater advantages. Have the country boors of Britain preserved and cultivated their English language among them with as much assiduity and success as the Irish peasantry have preserved and cultivated their native

Celtic? The great ethnic differences between the Saxon and the Celt would seem to be all summed up in the answer to this question.

Throughout the rural districts of England, the English language is not only, in many cases, wrongly accented, but corrupted and hopelessly distorted. "Nearly every county in Britain," says Noah Webster, "has its local dialect, its peculiar words and forms, which are used by the common people of the lower classes. \* \* \* This great variety of local idioms may be classified, according to Mr. Ellis, in six divisions: Southern, Western, Eastern, Midland, Northern and Lowland (Scotch), each of which falls apart into several subdivisions or districts. For most of the dialects, glossaries have been published, often with specimen compositions of greater or less extent: but only the Scotch (the lineal descendant of the Old Northumbrian) can be said to have a literature."

Mr. A. J. Ellis, above referred to, has given a general outline of the location of those several dialects in his work on the "English Dialects." In his public capacity, as man of letters and President of the London Philological Society, he made a personal canvass of Britain, to ascertain the condition of the English language among the country folk; and according to his own testimony, in several of the districts which he visited, the English language was so wretchedly corrupted that he failed to understand it when spoken. From among the almost innumerable instances of corruption which he gives, the following examples are taken at random, without reference to any particular dialect or district. To begin with, the vowel *e* is sounded like *a*; as *marri* for *merry*; the vowel *o* is corrupted into *uo*; as *suom* for *some*; and the vowel *a* is broken up into *ei*; as *neim* for *name*. The consonant *s* is sounded like *z*; as *zuom* for *some*; and *f* is



sounded like *v*; as *vram* for *from*. The word *pull* is pronounced *puol*, *time* is pronounced *taoym* and *taum*, and *home* is pronounced *hium*. *Road* is pronounced *roud*, *take* is pronounced *taiuk*, and *house* is pronounced *hoos*. The words *we know* are corrupted into *wi noan*, *have you* into *ann yoa*, *will they* into *woan dhi*, and *do we* into *duon wi*. In this manner, every word which the English peasantry have occasion to use is turned by them into a corrupt form, which in almost every instance differs so much from the written form that it may be said to demand an orthography of its own. This is precisely what constitutes the dialectic peculiarity. Wherever the spoken word differs from the written word, there you have a new dialect.

Now, in considering the difference between the two dialects, so-called, of the Gaelic language, we are not involved in a question of corruption, but simply in a question as to the proper position of the accent, and that only in regard to a certain class of words. It is naturally to be inferred, therefore, that in Gaelic there *are* no corruptions. This is perfectly true; and not only is the Gaelic tongue comparatively free from corruptions, but it is evidently plain to any one who knows even the fundamental principles of the language, that it is *proof* against corruption. This redeeming virtue of the Gaelic tongue, and which distinguishes it from all other languages now in existence, lies mainly in those nice distinctions which obtain in its primary alphabetic sounds, and which are usually termed *broad* and *slender*, *long* and *short*. The twelve consonants of the language, as has been already explained (pages 3 to 7), are so characteristic that each is susceptible of two distinct sounds, commonly called the *broad* sound and the *slender* sound. Now, each of these sounds, which a consonant is capable

of assuming, is so distinguished from its opposite, that it would be considered the greatest violation, orally or otherwise, to confound them. Hence it is that, no matter what vicissitudes the language may have passed through, the broad consonant could not by any possible phenomenon become slender, or the slender consonant become broad. The consonantal sounds, then, that were broad in ancient times are broad to-day, and those that were slender in ancient times are slender to-day. And by this singularly happy principle in our language, which has preserved it—in its consonantal framework at least—inviolable and inviolate for thousands of years, we, Irishmen of the present day, can affirm, as can also our kin of the Highlands of Scotland, that we speak the same language which was spoken by the bards and brehons, the druids and *fáidhe* of antiquity.\*

The same principle which has preserved the consonants from corruption has also preserved the vowels. These latter are classified into broad and slender, from which, indeed, the consonants derive their broad and slender sounds. In addition to this, each one of the five vowels is capable of assuming two sounds, the *long* sound and the *short* sound, which are as distinct, one from the other, as the broad and slender sounds of a consonant, and equally uninterchangeable. With the exception of two vowels (o and e) which have, in a number of words,

\*Notwithstanding this remarkable conservation of the Gaelic tongue, it has suffered from its five centuries of neglect and proscription. In the spoken language of the present day there are, indeed, a few corruptions, as might be expected; but these corruptions have been introduced through the influence of the English language, and prevail only in the North of Ireland, where the English influence was first felt. Thus, in Ulster, the combination of consonants, *cn*, is never pronounced, simply because such a combination does not occur in English. *Cn* is therefore pronounced like the English combination *cr*; as “*cnoc*,” a hill, pronounced “*croc*.” The slender sound of the dental (*d* or *t*) is also somewhat corrupt, but slightly differing from the broad sound. (For proper sound, see page 6.)



broken up into partly diphthongal sounds (thus, immediately after the Danish invasion, the vowel *o* produced the sound of *e*, represented by the digraph *oe*, *ae*, or *ao*; and the vowel *e* produced the sound of *a*, represented by the digraph *ea*), the language is, in its vowel element, the same to-day as it was two thousand years ago.†

Assuming that the student has formed a good conception of this preservative principle of the Gaelic tongue — a principle which has not been heretofore sufficiently elucidated — we shall now resume the study with which we started, and which forms the subject of our present lesson; namely, the consideration of “Words of more than one Syllable:”

There is, in every word of more than one syllable, as has been already stated, an accented syllable, which is distinguished from all the other syllables in the same word by having a particular stress of voice placed upon it, which gives it a certain degree of prominence or audibility. The degree of audibility, however, which the accented vowel receives is entirely at the expense of some other vowel in the same word, which latter is called the

† Some of the vowels and their combinations — the diphthongs and triphthongs — are somewhat corrupted in the semi-Anglicized vernacular of the North. In the extreme solicitude which the Ultonians, and sometimes, too, the Connacians, betrayed in making their native Gaelic resemble as much as possible the language of their masters, they made certain peculiar vowel sounds of the former agree exactly with certain sounds peculiar to the latter. Thus, the prominent vowel, *o*, in the digraph *oi*, is sounded like *e*; as “*coirce*,” oats, pronounced “*ceirce*.” The proper diphthong *ia* is sounded like a single vowel *i*, and *ua* like a single vowel *u*. The digraph *ao* (*oe* or *ae*) is sounded like *oe* in *Croesus*.

In Munster there are only two vowel corruptions; viz., the vowel *o* in the word “*mor*,” great, which is sounded like the diphthong *ua*; and the digraph *ea* (now generally written *eu*), which is improperly sounded like the diphthong *ea* in the English word “*fear*.” These, however, are of recent introduction, and occur only in common conversation. In repeating poetry, prayers, or any exalted kind of composition, they are scrupulously discarded, even by the most illiterate peasant, as vulgar modernisms. If the Ultonians were equally as candid about acknowledging the corruptions which have obtained among them, all would be well!

*obscure* vowel. Obscurity is the very antithesis of prominence; wherefore it is that a word which has an accented vowel must also, as a matter of necessity, have a correspondingly obscure vowel. In illustration of this we can do no better than reproduce the observation of Walker upon the obscure vowels in English: "If," says Walker, the accent be kept strongly on the first syllable of the word *tolerable*, as it always ought to be, we find scarcely any distinguishable difference to the ear, if we substitute *u* or *o* instead of *a*, in the penultimate syllable; thus, *tolerable*, *toleroble*, and *toleruble*, are exactly the same word to the ear, if pronounced without premeditation or transposing the accent for the real purpose of distinction." etc.

The obscure vowel in Gaelic was very carelessly dealt with by the celebrated scribes of old. In the Gaelic manuscripts we find the three broad vowels, *a*, *o*, *u*, written indifferently for an obscure broad vowel, and the two slender vowels, *e*, *i*, for an obscure slender vowel. But it never occurs that a broad vowel is written for a slender vowel, or a slender vowel for a broad vowel, in an obscure syllable.† The two classes, broad and slender, are never confounded however obscure the syllable may be. In all cases of obscurity, modern writers of Gaelic prefer to use the vowel *a* for the broad class and the vowel *e* for the

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† This holds true in regard to words of more than one syllable. There are a few monosyllables in the language written at present with a broad vowel, which in ancient times were written with a slender vowel; and a few others again which, though now written with a slender vowel, were anciently written with a broad vowel. For instance, the definite article "an" was anciently written "in." The verb "is" (the present tense of the verb "to be," meaning the same as "ta," but used in a different collocation), was anciently written "as"; as in the expression, "is fear me," I am a man, anciently written "as fer me," more anciently still, "asam fer." This word, however, though now written with a slender vowel, has the consonant *s* broad in sound; and in this connection, it should be borne in mind that it forms the only exception, in the modern language, to the rule which declares that a consonant must derive its sound from the vowel with which it is written.

slender class, except in certain words where the etymology determines the identity of the obscure vowel.

Short vowels only are obscure. Long vowels may be, and often are, modified by the influence of a strong accent, but they are never really obscure. §

The vowel preceding or following an accented syllable is, as a general rule, obscure in sound.

A final vowel in a word of more than one syllable, is always obscure.

Final *e* is never silent in Gaelic, as in English; it always forms a separate syllable. Thus, "file," a poet, and "fine," a tribe, are both pronounced in two syllables, *fil-lé fin-né*, etc.

§ There are, even in English, quite a number of vowels, naturally long or grave in sound, which are very much modified by the influence of a strong accent. Take, for example, words ending in -ary and -ory—such as necessary, contrary, exemplary, territory, promontory, etc.—which are pronounced in the United States with a secondary, or grave, accent on the penultimate syllable. Now, as these words are pronounced in England, the accent is so energetically placed upon the first syllable that it completely cancels the secondary accent so prominent in the language of the United States. This gives a good example of how words like "amadan" are pronounced in the province of Ulster.

The difference, in fact, that exists between the rival dialects of "Leath Choinn" and "Leath Mhogha" (The Northern and Southern half of Ireland), is no greater than that which distinguishes the several varieties of English which prevail in England and in the United States. The only difference is that while the Gaelic has only two slightly varying dialects, the English language is broken up into several dialects of the greatest dissimilarity. We can easily conceive what might have been the fate of the English language had it been subjected to the same ill-treatment, proscription, and calumny which the language of Ireland suffered at the hands of the savage Saxons. That must be a great language which, after centuries of enforced obloquy, blooms up again into perennial freshness and challenges comparison with the cultivated languages of the world. The Gaelic language had reached a high stage of evolutionary perfection long before the blighting hand of England was laid upon it; so that, like a strong man battling against some wild beast of the woods, it bravely resisted the encroachments of its adversary, and now, after the long struggle and its triumph, it needs but a little encouragement to display its former vigor and activity. In its inherent characteristics, the language is such that it resists corruption and corrupting influences, and in this respect it forms a lasting symbol, or memorial, of that unserving moral purity of the people whose language it is. The Irish language and people have now been sufficiently put to the test; they have been weighed in the balance, and they have not been found wanting.

## VOCABULARY.

The following vocabulary consists of words of two and three syllables. In the left hand column, every word has at least one of its syllables long in sound. In the opposite right hand column, every word has all its syllables short.

|                                      |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| mála, <i>a bag.</i>                  | mala, <i>an eyebrow.</i>               |
| ciste, <i>a cake.</i>                | ciste, <i>a chest, a treasure.</i>     |
| arán, <i>bread.</i>                  | galar, <i>a disease.</i>               |
| árus, <i>a dwelling, habitation.</i> | anam, <i>a soul ; life.</i>            |
| sólás, <i>solace.</i>                | doras, <i>a door.</i>                  |
| dólás, <i>dolor, sorrow.</i>         | capall, <i>a horse.</i>                |
| dána, <i>bold.</i>                   | obann, <i>sudden.</i>                  |
| cúram, <i>care.</i>                  | tobar, <i>a well.</i>                  |
| ársa, <i>old, ancient.</i>           | focal, <i>a word.</i>                  |
| dílis, <i>true, faithful, dear.</i>  | file, <i>a poet.</i>                   |
| gránna, <i>ugly, unbecoming.</i>     | pobal, <i>people, populace.</i>        |
| úrlár, <i>a floor.</i>               | turus, <i>a journey.</i>               |
| pisgín, <i>a kitten.</i>             | srimile, <i>a slouch.</i>              |
| brúsgar, <i>fragments, debris.</i>   | mustar, <i>self-conceit.</i>           |
| bradán, <i>a salmon.</i>             | gustal, <i>affluence, ostentation.</i> |
| mórnán, <i>a tray.</i>               | fada, <i>long, far.</i>                |
| mórtus, <i>boastfulness.</i>         | sonas, <i>prosperity.</i>              |
| búndún, <i>a blunder.</i>            | donas, <i>misfortune.</i>              |
| cadás, <i>cotton.</i>                | ocras, <i>hunger.</i>                  |
| cúntas, <i>an account.</i>           | milis, <i>sweet.</i>                   |
| camog, <i>a curl, a comma.</i>       | cumas, <i>power.</i>                   |
| mónadán, <i>a mountain berry.</i>    | tamall, <i>a time, a while.</i>        |
| dúradán, <i>a speck.</i>             | Colm-cille, <i>Columkill.</i>          |
| amadán, <i>a fool.</i>               | macalla, <i>an echo,</i>               |
| comórtus, <i>comparison.</i>         | marasgal, <i>a marshal, herald.</i>    |
| galltrúmpa, <i>a trumpet.</i>        | gramasgar, <i>a rabble.</i>            |
| fosgadán, <i>an umbrella.</i>        | calma, <i>brave.</i>                   |



*EXERCISE II.*

1. Turus. 2. An turus. 3. An turus agus an cúntas.
4. Mála mór agus an turus fada. 5. Tá an turus fada.
6. Tá an doras mór agus tá an cnoc árd. 7. Bás obann agus cúntas ole. 8. Arán bán agus ciste mór, lán. 9. Tá an capall bán, agus tá an ciste mór lán. 10. File 'gus an pobal, clú 'gus dán. 11. Ciste milis. 12. Tá an ciste mór agus milis. 13. File dána agus focal borb. 14. Sult agus sólás, dólás agus donas. 15. An marasgal calma agus an capall bán. 16. Pobal dílis, pórt agus an bád. 17. An file agus an macalla. 18. Colm-cille agus an bárd. 19. Tá an capall óg mall, agus tá sé fann lag.\*
20. Turus mór agus cúntas lán,  
Gustal, gas, agus dúradán.
21. Focal dána, bórd a's bas,  
Cúram gránna, gort a's gas.
22. Urlár mór, glan, bórd a's bonn,  
Arus, mórtus, gort, a's clann.
23. Pobal ársa, capall mall,  
Ciste gránna, gort a's poll.
24. Gustal a's gort a's mórtus dána,  
Turus, an dos, 's an folt úr, gránna.

*Translation.*

1. A journey. 2. The journey. 3. The journey and the account. 4. A large bag and the long journey. 5. The journey is long. 6. The door is large and the hill is high. 7. Sudden death and a bad account. 8. White

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\*Ta se fann lag. (He is weary and weak.) In translating this sentence into English, the adjectives, "fann," "lag," must be connected by the conjunction, and. In Gaelic, the conjunction is used to connect two adjectives only when they are collectively predicated of the same noun, to preclude the possibility of one of them being taken for an ordinary qualifier. In case of two adjectives referring to a pronoun, as in the above sentence, the conjunction is not necessary, as a pronoun admits of no other than a predicated

bread and *a* large, full chest. 9. The horse is white and the large chest is full. 10. *A* poet and the people, fame and *a* poem. 11. *A* sweet cake. 12. The cake is large and sweet. 13. *A* bold poet and *a* haughty word. 14. Mirth and solace, dolor and misfortune. 15. The brave marshal and the white horse. 16. *A* faithful people, *a* harbor and the boat. 17. The poet and the echo. 18. Columkille and the bard: 19. The young horse is slow, and he is weak *and* weary. [Nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, and 24 are in metre, and the student is expected to make his own translation.]

—:o:—

### LESSON III.

#### COMBINATIONS OF VOWELS — DIPHTHONGS.

A diphthong is composed of two vowels coming together, without any consonant intervening; as *ua* in *truant*, *ea* in *fear*. Vowels thus combined unite in three ways: (I.) Each vowel is distinctly pronounced. (II.) Both vowels coalesce and produce a sound quite different from either. (III.) One of the vowels only is heard, while the other becomes silent or nearly so. After these three modes of coalescing, Gaelic diphthongs may be divided into three classes, as follow:

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adjective. In analogy to this, the modern speaker of Gaelic has come to omit the conjunction even between two adjectives predicated of the same noun. Thus, the expression "*Ta an file fann lag*," (the weary poet is weak) is made to convey the same meaning as "*Ta an file fann agus lag*," (the poet is weary and weak.) The difficulty is obviated, however, in the spoken language, where there is a slight pause made between the logical subject and the predicate, which serves to draw the line, as it were, between both.



CLASS I. This class comprises those diphthongs in which both vowels are distinctly sounded. Only two diphthongs belong to this class; namely, *ua* and *ia*. In these diphthongs both vowels are not of equal prominence, the first being somewhat longer than the second,\* while both blend together to form *one* syllable. Examples:

|                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| gual, <i>coal</i> .    | ciall, <i>sense</i> .    |
| fuair, <i>cold</i> .   | fiail, <i>generous</i> . |
| cluas, <i>an ear</i> . | sgian, <i>a knife</i> .  |
| uan, <i>a lamb</i> .   | grian, <i>the sun</i> .  |

CLASS II. Only one diphthong belongs to this class; namely, *ao*. This diphthong sounds like *ao* in *gaol*, or the first vowel, *e*, in *where*; but the consonants before and after it are both broad. When *ao* is final—that is when not followed by a consonant—it is written *ae*.† Examples:

|                           |                            |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| gaol, <i>a relation</i> . | saor, <i>cheap; free</i> . |
| maor, <i>a steward</i> .  | daor, <i>dear; dire</i> .  |
| aos, <i>an age</i> .      | aol, <i>lime</i> .         |
| caol, <i>slender</i> .    | rae, <i>the moon</i> .     |

\* In the Northern dialect, these two proper diphthongs (*ia* and *ua*) are converted into improper diphthongs, by false analogy; that is, the second vowel, *a*, of both diphthongs is suppressed in the pronunciation, while the first vowel, *i* of the one and *u* of the other, is the only vowel pronounced.

A good illustration of this corrupt pronunciation of the proper diphthongs (See foot-note page 23) may be afforded by the following rhyming couplets, taken from Dr. McHale's Gaelic translation of Homer's *Iliad*:

Thus, the proper diphthong *ia* is made to rhyme with the improper diphthong *io* (i. e. with the single vowel *i*) in the following couplet:

"Go sublach, gach duine d' ith do reir a mbian,  
'Gus d' ol go saoitheamhail 'gus go suaire an fion."—Book I.; line 593.

The proper diphthong *ua* is made to rhyme with the single vowel *u* in the following couplet:

"Idir fir a's mna, mo bhriathra 'gus mo run  
Ta daingean fastuighth' i mo chroidhe go buan."—Book VIII.; line 7.

† In the Northern dialect (including Ulster and Connacht), the diphthong *ao* receives a light, drawn, slender sound, like that of the single vowel *i*, or

CLASS III. This class comprises those diphthongs in which one vowel only is heard, like *ou* in *four*, *journey*, etc. They are, éi, éa, ío, ái, ói, úi, eó, iú. One of the vowels in a diphthong of this class—that over which the accent mark is placed—may be termed the *audible* or *prominent* vowel, the other being known as the *inaudible* or *silent* vowel. But it is characteristic of this prominent vowel that in some words it is long, like *o* in *four*, while in other words it is short, like *o* in *journey*; for which reason these are often called *variable* diphthongs, more correctly *improper* diphthongs.

## EI.

The first vowel, *e*, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the second vowel, *i*, being inaudible or silent; consequently the sound of this diphthong is that of the single vowel *e* in *there*; as “féis,” a *festival*. When the diphthong is short it sounds like *e* in *belt*; as “geilt,” a *lunatic*. Examples:

béim, a *wound*.

leirg, a *plain*.

géim, a *bellow*.

meirg, *rust*.

sgléip, *show*.

geir, *tallow*.

spéis, *heed, concern*.

breis, a *superfluity*.

The presence of the silent vowel, *i*, in this diphthong is determined by the slender sound of the following consonant, for, though the letter *e* is itself a slender vowel, it exerts no influence in making slender, or *attenuating*, as it is called, the consonant which follows it. (See page 9.)

“*ee*” in the English word “*feel*,” with, of course, the preceding and following consonants broad. This sound is well illustrated in the following couplet from Dr. McHale’s *Iliad*, where *ao* is made to form an assonance with *io* (i. e. with the single vowel *i*.)

“Las fraoch an oirc go h-obann suas mar chaor,

Do bhagair dioghaltas, a’s rinn a bhagairt fìor.”—Book I.; line 22.

EA.

The first vowel, e, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the second vowel, a, being inaudible or silent; consequently this diphthong sounds like the single vowel e, except that the consonant following it is broad, as shown by the presence of the silent broad vowel, a. Examples:

|                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| féar (feur),* <i>grass.</i>    | fear, <i>a man.</i>   |
| sgéal (sgeul), <i>a story.</i> | bean, <i>a woman.</i> |
| béal (beul), <i>a mouth.</i>   | geal, <i>bright.</i>  |
| méar (meur), <i>a finger.</i>  | deas, <i>pretty.</i>  |

When this diphthong is long the vowel u is inserted, instead of a, for a silent vowel; but when the diphthong

\*Fear (feur). Words in which the diphthong ea (long) was anciently employed are now spelt with the diphthong eu (that is, in other words, substituting one silent vowel, u, for another silent vowel, a). This innovation was brought into use as early as 1650, by the celebrated Celtic scholar and historian, Dudley Forbes (Dubhaltach Mac Fírbisigh). The principal advantage of the substitution lies mainly in the fact that it dispenses with the accent mark, on the prominent vowel, which otherwise would be requisite, in order to distinguish the diphthong ea when long from the same diphthong when short.

Another good reason why eu should be used, provisionally at least, in preference to ea (long), is this: We have already learned (See foot-note page 23) that in Munster the diphthong ea (long) is corruptly sounded like the proper diphthong ia, or "ea" in the English word "fear." Now, if we substitute eu for ea, the Munsterman who reads the language will have no pretext for infusing the sound of a into this diphthong, or corrupting its prominent vowel, e, into the sound of i.

It should be here noted that eu, in a number of monosyllables, is susceptible of being changed to eo, by poetic license. Thus, the word "feur" may be also written "feor"; "meur" "meor"; "sgeul" "sgeol," etc. These words, then, may be said to have each two forms: the primary form, with the diphthong eu, and the secondary form, with the diphthong eo. The difference between the primary and the secondary form, both of which are identical in meaning, is, that the former is used in prose and the latter in poetry. 'Feur' is a prosaic form, and 'feor' a poetic form, both of which denote the same thing.

And in this connection, it may be well to remember that there are, in Gaelic, quite a number of words which have two forms, identical in meaning, one of which forms is relegated to one sort of discourse, and the other to a different sort of discourse. Later on, therefore, we shall have some more to say regarding primary and secondary forms.

is short the *a* is retained, because the accent is then shifted from *e* to *a*. So that, as the short diphthong is now pronounced in monosyllables and in the first syllable of polysyllables, the *a*, and not the *e*, is the prominent vowel.† *Ea*, short, is therefore sounded like *ea* in *heart*; as “fear,” *a man*; “bean,” *a woman*. And in some words also the *a* is lengthened; as “*ceárd*,” *a craft*, etc.

### IO.

The first vowel, *i*, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the second vowel, *o*, being silent; consequently this diphthong sounds like the single vowel *i*, except that the consonant following it is broad, as shown by the presence of the silent broad vowel, *o*. Examples:

*cíos*, *rent*.

*fíon*, *wine*.

*fíor*, *true*.

*síol*, *seed*.

*fios*, *knowledge*.

*lios*, *a fort*.

*sgrios*, *a destruction*.

*mior*, *myrrh*.

When this diphthong is short, there is a tendency, observable in the spoken language, to bring the silent vowel, *o*, into undue prominence; as “*sioc*,” ‡ *frost*, (*pronounced*

† It is only in monosyllables and in the first syllable of polysyllables that the first vowel, *e*, loses its prominence when the diphthong is short. When the diphthong occurs in the second or third syllable of a word, the *e* is then, as it ought to be, prominent (though obscure); e. g., “*muilleann*,” a mill, (pron. mul-len); “*Caiseal*,” Cashel, (pron. kha-shel). The exception to this rule are words of two syllables ending in *ch*, which, in Munster, have the accent so strongly placed on the final guttural that the vowel *a*, of the diphthong *ea* (short) is decidedly brought into prominence; e. g., “*coileach*,” a rooster, (pron. kulh-ach); “*aireach*,” careful, (pron. ir-rach).

In Old Gaelic, the first vowel, *e*, of this diphthong, maintained its prominence in all cases, when short as well as when long. This old pronunciation even yet lives in the counties of Louth and Monaghan, where the vowel *a*, of the diphthong *ea*, is never brought into prominence. Thus, “fear” is pronounced “fer”; “bean” “ben”; “geal” “gel”; “deas” “des,” etc.

‡ Some monosyllables containing *io* (short) change that diphthong into *ea* when, in the course of inflection, they take an additional syllable; as “*fios*,” “*feasa*”; “*lios*,” “*leasa*”; “*sioc*,” “*seaca*,” etc.



*shook*). This is especially noticeable in the Munster dialect, when the diphthong is followed by nn in a monosyllable, the silent vowel being then brought into prominence and sounded like *o* in *do*, or *u* in *tune*; as “fionn,” *fair*, (*pronounced foon*.)

# AI.

The first vowel, *a*, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the second vowel, *i*, being silent. *Ai* sounds, therefore, like the single vowel *a*, except that the consonant following it is slender, as shown by the presence of the silent slender vowel, *i*. Examples :

stáir, *a history*.

áit, *a place*.

sráid, *a street*.

láir, *a mare*.

stair, *a paragraph*.

ait, *queer; pleasant*.

bail, *a blessing*.

stail *a stallion*.

When *ai* (short) appears in the second or third syllable of a word, the silent vowel, *i*, is brought into prominence ; as “carraig,” *a rock*, (*pron. kar-rig*) ; “Pádraig,” *Patrick*, (*pron. pau-dhrig*). Compare the English diphthong *ai* in such words as *curtain*, *certain*, *Britain*, *again*, etc.

# OI.

The first vowel, *o*, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the second vowel, *i*, being silent. *Oi* sounds, therefore, like the single vowel *o*, except that the consonant following it is slender, as shown by the presence of the silent slender vowel, *i*. Examples :

cóir, *just, right*.

glóir, *glory*.

tóir, *a pursuit*.

móin, *peat, moor; mountain*.

sgoil, *a school*.

toil, *will*.

toirt, *bulk, substantiality*.

coirt, *bark of trees*.



When oi (short) appears in the second or third syllable of a word, the silent vowel, i, is brought into prominence; as “anois,” *now*, (*pron. an-nish*); “anoir,” *easterly*, (*pron. an-nir*).

## UI.

The first vowel, u, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the second vowel, i, being silent. Ui sounds, therefore, like the single vowel u, except that the consonant following it is slender, as shown by the presence of the silent slender vowel, i. Examples:

|                                  |                       |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| cúis, <i>a cause.</i>            | fuil, <i>blood.</i>   |
| súil, <i>an eye.</i>             | cruit, <i>a harp.</i> |
| dúil, <i>desire; an element.</i> | cuil, <i>a fly.</i>   |
| smúit, <i>dust, mist.</i>        | duig, <i>a pang.</i>  |

When ui (short) occurs in the second or third syllable of a word, the silent vowel, i, is brought into prominence; as “tarcuisne,” *contempt* (*pron. tar-khish-ne*).

## EO.

The *second* vowel, o, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the first vowel, e, being silent. Eo sounds, therefore, like the single vowel o, except that the consonant *preceding* it is slender, as shown by the presence of the silent slender vowel, e. Examples:

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| seól, <i>a sail.</i>  | deoch, <i>a drink.</i> |
| ceól, <i>music.</i>   | eochair, <i>a key.</i> |
| meón, <i>a habit.</i> | Eochaidh, <i>Hugo.</i> |
| león, <i>a lion.</i>  | _____                  |

There are only three words in the modern language in which this diphthong is short in sound; viz., “deoch,” *a drink*; “eochair,” *a key*, and “Eochaidh,” *Hugo*. In all

other words the diphthong is long and need not take the accent mark.

# IU.

The *second* vowel, u, is the prominent vowel in this diphthong, the first vowel, i, being silent. Iu sounds, therefore, like the single vowel u, except that the consonant *preceding* it is slender, as shown by the presence of the silent slender vowel, i. Examples :

siúr, *a sister.*

fiú, *worth.*

liúgh, *a scream.*

diú, *a place.*

fliuch, *wet.*

tiugh, *thick.*

andiugh, *to-day.*

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There are only three words in the modern language in which this diphthong is short in sound ; viz., “fliuch,” *wet* ; “tiugh,” *thick*, and “andiugh,” *to-day*. In all other words the diphthong is long and need not take the distinguishing accent mark.

The eight improper diphthongs (or those of the third class, according to the above classification) form a very important factor in the orthography of the Gaelic language. When they are thoroughly comprehended the very secret of Gaelic orthography will have been mastered. The study of them is so intimately connected with the study of the sounds of the consonants, already set forth (pages 3 to 7), that it may be well to impress upon the student the advisability of again taking up the study of the consonants in connection with the improper diphthongs. There is one thing in connection with these improper diphthongs which the student can never expect to understand, until he first understands the difference between the two sounds — broad and slender — of every

one of the twelve consonants, and that is the nature and function of the silent vowel.

The silent vowel of an improper diphthong is used to regulate the sound of the consonant next to it. Thus, for instance, in the word “cúis,” (which is universally pronounced *koosh*), the broad vowel, u, is the only vowel discernible to the ear. Now, if this were, in reality, the only vowel in the word, it is certain that it would give a broad sound not only to the preceding c but also to the following s. But, as the pronunciation will show, the following s has its slender sound (that of *sh* in *ship*), and as we know that this slender sound must be occasioned by a slender vowel (for otherwise the s, like the c, would come under the influence of the broad vowel, u), we conclude, therefore, that there does exist a slender vowel between the broad vowel, u, and the following attenuated consonant, s. Consequently, instead of spelling this word with a single vowel (cús), it must be spelt with the improper diphthong úi (cúis). Whenever, therefore, a consonant sounded along with an audible vowel has a timbre different from that which the audible vowel would give it, it is certain that an inaudible vowel intervenes, to account for the sound of the consonant.

This brings us now to the very important fact, that the existence of the silent vowel in an improper diphthong is to be determined only by the sound of the consonant which it influences. We have, in any particular case, only negative proof of its presence. From the fact that whenever its use is made requisite, it is always employed in connection with, and to regulate the sound of, a consonant, the silent vowel of an improper diphthong may, on that account, be very appropriately called the *consonant vowel*. The distinction implied in this (new) name the student should well bear in mind, as we shall hence-

forward refer to the two vowel elements of an improper diphthong as the *prominent vowel* and the *consonant vowel*.

In all the improper diphthongs — with the exception of *ei* — it will be noticed that when the prominent vowel is broad the accompanying consonant vowel is slender, and when the prominent vowel is slender the accompanying consonant vowel is broad. This regularity is of utmost importance, as it enables the student, in any particular case, to infer the nature of an omitted consonant vowel (for consonant vowels are generally omitted in old writings.) If, in writing the word “*cúis*,” the consonant vowel be omitted and such omission indicated by an apostrophe, or any other conventional mark — thus “*cú's*” — it is evident that the reader can infer from the nature of the remaining prominent vowel, which belongs to the broad class, that the omitted consonant vowel belongs to the slender class. In like manner may the consonant vowel be inferred in “*c'ól*,” *music*; “*s'úr*,” *a sister*; “*c'árd*,” *a craft*; “*stá'r*,” *a story*; “*gló'r*,” *glory*. In words like “*fé'r*,” *grass*, and “*cí's*,” *rent*, we can infer that the omitted consonant vowel belongs to the broad class, whereas the retained prominent vowel is of the opposite slender class. In some of our Gaelic manuscripts the omission of the consonant vowel is indicated by two dots, resembling a colon, which are placed in its stead; thus, “*cú:s*,” “*fé:r*,” “*cí:s*,” etc.\* In the most ancient manu-

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\* For an illustration of this method of contraction the student is referred to the “*Miscellany of the Celtic Society*,” wherein are to be found a number of historical poems by Giolla Brighde Mac Conmidhe and others, in which this system of contracting the improper diphthongs, by omitting the consonant vowel and supplying its place with two dots, is employed. But it must be observed that this method of contraction is not carried to its full length in the orthography of the poems referred to, for only the diphthong *io* is found thus contracted. Thus, for example, “*giolla*” is written “*gi:lla*,” “*cios*” is written “*ci:s*,” and “*flon*” is written “*fi:n*,” etc. The two dots are placed almost directly over the retained prominent vowel, and bear a striking resemblance to an inverted diæresis. It may be intended by these



scripts the omission of the consonant vowel is not indicated by any mark whatever, it being left to the reader's judgment to justify the sound of the consonant.

In many instances we find the consonant vowel retained, but written in a subordinate position, somewhat after the manner of the Greek *Iota subscript*. A good illustration of this are the familiar contractions used in some manuscripts for the diphthongs *ea* and *ui*.

two dots to notify the reader that, in the syllable in which they are placed, two vowels are understood to be employed (one of which is left to be inferred.) Why it is that the consonant vowel should be omitted from the diphthong *io* and retained in all the other improper diphthongs? is a question that cannot be very satisfactorily answered. Perhaps it may have seemed to the writer, or rather transcriber, of those poems that the consonant vowel was less indispensable in *io* than in any other of the improper diphthongs; or perhaps again, he did not wish to encumber his pages with too many dots.

The student should here bear in mind that this method of omitting the consonant vowel in Gaelic is not on a par with the system employed by some English lexicographers of omitting certain useless vowels in English. We all know that Webster has omitted the vowel *o* from the diphthong *ou* at the end of certain dissyllabic words. For example, the words neighbour, labour, vapour, colour, vigour, rigour, are written in the United States, on the authority of Webster, thus neighbor, labor, vapor, color, vigor, rigor, etc. The best authorities agree, indeed, that some of those silent vowels in English are simply useless, because they suit no purpose, and consequently the general tendency has been to discard them altogether. In Gaelic, on the other hand, the silent vowel cannot, in any case, be absolutely discarded without violating the sound of a consonant: but, on the contrary, wherever it is omitted, for contraction purposes, the reader must always suppose it to be present and regulate the consonant sound accordingly.

There are employed, even in English, certain silent vowels which are identical in every respect with the consonant vowels of Gaelic orthography. Now, there is a rule in English Grammar which says that primitive words ending in *e*, when they take the derivative suffix *-able*, drop the final *e*; as sale, salable; compare, comparable; receive, receivable, etc. In this case it would be utterly useless to retain the final silent *e* of the primitive form in the derivative form. If, however, we take primitives whose final *e* is preceded immediately by *c* or *g*, such as notice, change, marriage, etc., and to them we add the suffix *-able*, we are not permitted to drop the final *e*; but, on the contrary, this otherwise useless vowel must be retained in the derivative forms in order to preserve the slender sound of the preceding *c* or *g* of the primitive forms, thus noticeable, changeable, marriageable. The silent *e* in these words, being used simply to preserve the sound of a consonant, is identical with what, in Gaelic, we have known as the consonant vowel. We have already learned (page 5) that *c* and *g* are the only consonants in English that have a decidedly broad and slender sound. In Gaelic every consonant has a broad and a slender sound, consequently consonant vowels are more prevalent in Gaelic than in English.



The omission of the consonant vowel is, in reality, a method of contraction employed systematically by our ancient scribes to save time and parchment. It is not to be assumed, as some have done, that because the consonant vowel of modern Gaelic is found omitted in the most ancient manuscripts we possess, it therefore had no legitimate existence in the ancient grammatical structure of the language. If, when those old books were written, the strict grammatical requirements of the language had been consulted, it is manifest that the consonant vowel would never have been dispensed with. The fact is that the consonant vowel, though silent and used ostensibly to regulate the sound of a consonant, is no less effective in regulating the sound of the prominent vowel with which it is written. Thus, for example, the prominent vowel, o, in the word "ceól," assumes a graver sound than the single o in the word "mór:" and this relative intensity of sound of the prominent vowel is due mainly to the influence of the silent consonant vowel accompanying it. It will, hence, seem obvious that the consonant vowel has, in every improper diphthong, a legitimate existence, and should therefore never be omitted.

The two diphthongs ea and io (short), in the second syllable of a word, have the slender vowel prominent, and as a short slender vowel is, in such position, always obscure, it follows that ea and io are often confounded. Thus "muilleann," *a mill*, is quite often written "muillionn," and "Caiseal," *Cashel*, is often written "Caisiol." Modern writers prefer to use the diphthong ea in all such cases, except in certain words where the etymology favors the diphthong io; such as "cúilfhionn," *fair-haired*, (applied to a woman); "druimfhionn," *white-backed*, (applied to a cow.)

The three diphthongs ai, oi, ui, (short), in the second syllable of a word, have the slender vowel, i, prominent, the broad vowel becoming correspondingly silent. This gives the three diphthongs the same sound—that of i short—in the position indicated: and consequently, in old writings, we find them written indifferently. The Four Masters write the word “carraig” in three ways, thus “carraig,” “carraig,” “carraig,” without using any discrimination whatever. Modern writers prefer to use the diphthong ai in the second syllable of words, except in a few cases where oi or ui seems more suitable; such as “anois,” *now*; “tarcuisne,” *contempt*.

There is a tendency, observable in the spoken language of the present day, to suppress the sound of the broad vowel of the three diphthongs ai, oi, ui, not only in the second syllable of words, as above stated, but also in the first syllable and even in monosyllables. This is well illustrated in the Munster pronunciation of dissyllables ending in ch—such as “cailleach,” *a hag*, (*pron. khil-lach*); “coileach,” *a rooster*, (*pron. khil-lach*); “tuir-seach,” *tired*, (*pron. thir-shach*)—in which the accent is so strongly placed on the final syllable that it completely sinks the sound of the prominent vowel in the first syllable. We have already shown (See foot-note page 23) that in Connacht the prominent vowel of oi is sounded like e; as “coirce,” *oats*, (*pron. keirke*.) This corrupt sound of the prominent vowels o and a obtains also, in a few words, in the Munster dialect; as “troid,” *strife*, (*pron. thred*); “air,” *on*, (*pron. eir*.)

This suppression or corruption of the prominent vowel of an improper diphthong occurs only when the diphthong is short—that is, when the prominent vowel itself is short—and never when the diphthong is long. It has been brought about mainly through laziness on the part

of the speakers and custodians of the language for the past two centuries to maintain the identity of the short vowel sound. Walker says of the English that "Where vowels are under the accent, the prince and the lowest of the people, with very few exceptions, pronounce them in the same manner: but the unaccented vowels, in the mouth of the former, have a distinct, open sound; while the latter often totally sink them, or change them into some other sound."

To properly pronounce an improper diphthong, then, the student should always maintain the sound of its prominent vowel, when short as well as when long; except in certain cases where, according to rule, that vowel loses prominence and the accompanying consonant vowel assumes it.

### VOCABULARY.

The following vocabulary, composed for the most part of words of one syllable, is intended to illustrate the sounds of the twelve diphthongs. First in order come the six "Long Diphthongs," or those which have always the same invariable, long sound; and next come the six "Variable Diphthongs," or those which, in some words, are long, and in other words are short.

#### THE SIX LONG DIPHTHONGS.

|                                    |                                 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| suan, <i>slumber.</i>              | duan, <i>an ode.</i>            |
| cuas, <i>a cave.</i>               | sguab, <i>a broom, a sweep.</i> |
| tuar, <i>an omen; bleach-yard.</i> | buan, <i>durable, lasting.</i>  |
| dual, <i>inheritance.</i>          | ruag, <i>a rout.</i>            |
| fiar, <i>slanting, awry.</i>       | iasg, <i>fish.</i>              |
| ciar, <i>black.</i>                | rian, <i>a sign, track.</i>     |
| mian, <i>mind, will, desire.</i>   | cian, <i>distant, remote.</i>   |
| pian, <i>pain, torment.</i>        | srian, <i>a bridle.</i>         |

|                                    |                                  |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| maol, <i>bald, blunt.</i>          | braon, <i>a drop.</i>            |
| taom, <i>a fit, plague.</i>        | craos, <i>a crawl; gluttony.</i> |
| faon, <i>void, exhausted.</i>      | aor, <i>air.</i>                 |
| caor, <i>a berry; thunderbolt.</i> | cae, <i>leisure.</i>             |
| leun, <i>sadness, grief.</i>       | geur, <i>sharp; sour.</i>        |
| seun, <i>luck, prosperity.</i>     | eun, <i>a bird.</i>              |
| breug, <i>a lie.</i>               | gleus, <i>tackle.</i>            |
| geug, <i>an arm, branch.</i>       | eug, <i>extinction, death.</i>   |
| ceol, <i>music.</i>                | beo, <i>alive, living.</i>       |
| leor, <i>abundant, sufficient.</i> | gleo, <i>noise, tumult.</i>      |
| eol, <i>knowledge.</i>             | seol, <i>a sail.</i>             |
| ceo, <i>fog, mist.</i>             | reo, <i>frost.</i>               |
| siur, <i>a sister.</i>             | gniud, <i>a whine.</i>           |
| gliu, <i>glew.</i>                 | diu, <i>a place.</i>             |
| fiu, <i>worth.</i>                 | trius, <i>trowsers.</i>          |
| liugh, <i>a scream.</i>            | giusta, <i>a clown.</i>          |

## THE SIX VARIABLE DIPHTHONGS.

|                                      |                                |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| sgáil, <i>a glare, shadow.</i>       | tais, <i>humid.</i>            |
| gráin, <i>hatred.</i>                | dair, <i>an oak.</i>           |
| cáin, <i>tribute, exaction.</i>      | fail, <i>hiccough.</i>         |
| cáim, <i>fault, blemish.</i>         | carraig, <i>a rock.</i>        |
| póit, <i>excess of drinking.</i>     | sgoilt, <i>a cleft, split.</i> |
| móid, <i>a vow.</i>                  | troid, <i>strife.</i>          |
| cóip, <i>a copy; troop.</i>          | toil, <i>the will.</i>         |
| dóid, <i>hand.</i>                   | anois, <i>now.</i>             |
| cúil, <i>corner, depository.</i>     | cuil, <i>a fly.</i>            |
| gnúis, <i>visage.</i>                | cuid, <i>part, portion.</i>    |
| úir, <i>earth.</i>                   | muir, <i>the sea.</i>          |
| súil, <i>an eye.</i>                 | tarcuisne, <i>contempt.</i>    |
| réim, <i>reign, sway.</i>            | geit, <i>a start.</i>          |
| méinn, <i>mien.</i>                  | Neid, <i>Mars.</i>             |
| léir, <i>manifest.</i>               | geilt, <i>a lunatic.</i>       |
| céim, <i>a step, grade; dignity.</i> | ceist, <i>a question.</i>      |



|                                   |                             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| díon, <i>shelter, protection.</i> | crios, <i>girdle; zone.</i> |
| síor, <i>perpetual, constant.</i> | smíor, <i>marrow.</i>       |
| líon, <i>flax.</i>                | slíos, <i>slope.</i>        |
| críon, <i>withered.</i>           | cíon, <i>fondness.</i>      |
| ceárd, <i>a craft, trade.</i>     | ceart, <i>right.</i>        |
| gearr, <i>short, curt.</i>        | meas, <i>esteem.</i>        |
| fearr, <i>better.</i>             | tearc, <i>rare.</i>         |
| milleán, <i>blame.</i>            | fireann, <i>male.</i>       |

### EXERCISE III.

1. Tá an rae geal agus tá an spéir árd. 2. Tá an sgian geur. 3. Bád mór, fada agus seol árd. 4. Tá an seol árd agus tá an turus fada. 5. Fear calma agus an leon. 6. Suan fada agus ceol binn. 7. Giusta borb agus an capall deas. 8. Císte milis agus im úr. 9. Cúis agus teist, fear agus tarcuísne. 10. Fear óg agus cúis ársa. 11. Tá an teist ait. 12. Cruit agus ceol, bárd agus sgoil. 13. Tá an toil saor. 14. Tá fíon daor. 15. Dún mór agus ceol binn. 16. Stáir ársa agus cúntas fíor. 17. Carraig árd agus áit olc. 18. Tá an cnoc árd fiar, agus tá an capall óg bán. 19. Tá iasg úr saor agus tá fíon daor. 20. Tá an fear árd agus tá sé lom, críon. 21. Tá tú ceart.

22. Cruit a's ceol deas, seol a's grian,  
Giusta mór, glic, brón a's pian.
23. Tá an cnoc mór, ársa árd a's fiar,  
An capall bán 's an mála ciar.

### Translation.

1. The moon is bright and the sky is high. 2. The knife is sharp. 3. A large, long boat and a high sail. 4. The sail is high and the journey is long. 5. A brave man and the lion. 6. Long slumber and melodious music. 7. A haughty clown and the nice horse. 8. A



sweet cake and fresh butter. 9. *A* cause and *a* testimony, *a* man and contempt. 10. *A* young man and *an* ancient cause. 11. The testimony is queer. 12. *A* harp and music, *a* bard and *a* school. 13. The will is free. 14. Wine is dear. 15. *A* large fort and melodious music. 16. Ancient history and *a* true account. 17. *A* large rock and *a* bad place. 18. The high hill is slanting and the young horse is white. 19. Fresh fish is cheap and wine is dear. 20. The man is tall and he is lean *and* decrepit. 21. You are right. (Nos. 22 and 23 are in metre and the student is expected to make his own translation.)

————:o:————

## LESSON IV.

### COMBINATIONS OF VOWELS — TRIPHTHONGS.

A triphthong is the union of three vowels in one sound or syllable. There are, in Gaelic, five triphthongs; viz., uai, iai, aoi, eoi, iui. These are formed from the five long diphthongs — ua, ia, ao, eo, iu — simply by the addition of the slender vowel *i*, which is practically silent and serves only to attenuate the sound of the following consonant. The sound of a triphthong, therefore, is precisely the same as that of the diphthong from which it is formed, except that the consonant following the triphthong is slender, as shown by the presence of the slender consonant vowel, *i*.

The triphthong *aoi* is rather exceptional in this respect, for, in pronouncing it, the *ao* loses its characteristic diphthongal sound and serves only to lengthen the sound of

the following i. Aoi is, therefore, sounded like *uee* 'in queen; as "saoi," a sage; "daoí," a dunce. Examples:—

|                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| fuaim, <i>a sound.</i>      | gruaim, <i>surliness, gloom.</i> |
| biail, <i>an axe.</i>       | spiaire, <i>a spy.</i>           |
| baois, <i>folly.</i>        | caoin, <i>gentle.</i>            |
| feoil, <i>meat, flesh.</i>  | beoir, <i>beer.</i>              |
| ciuin, <i>calm, silent.</i> | stiuir, <i>a steer.</i>          |

#### TRIPHTHONGS OF INFLECTION.

Triphthongs are frequently formed in the course of grammatical inflection. These latter, which may be called Triphthongs of Inflection, are to be distinguished from those which are not the result of inflection. The triphthong of inflection is generally produced in the formation of the genitive (or possessive) case singular and also the nominative case plural of some nouns. To illustrate this, however, it will be necessary to glance at the manner in which these cases are formed in Gaelic.

In all inflected languages, the genitive, or possessive case singular and the nominative case plural of most nouns are identical in their termination; that is, these two cases are inflected alike. In English, both are distinguished by the suffixed consonant *s* (the remnant of an older syllable *is*.) Thus, in the phrases, *the sun's disk; the moon's sphere; the mountain's top*; we have the nouns *sun*, *moon*, and *mountain* in the genitive, or possessive case singular. But the nominative case plural of these nouns is formed in the same way; thus, *suns, moons, mountains*.

In Gaelic these two cases are formed by the slender vowel *i*, which, if the noun to be inflected ends in a slender consonant, appears in the form of a suffix. Thus "tír," *land*, forms its genitive case "tíri"; and "sráid,"

*a street*, forms its genitive case “sráidi.” In the phrase “ceann tíri,” we find that the first noun, “ceann,” *a head, end, or terminus*, is in its nominative case, and the accompanying noun, “tír,” *land*, is in its genitive case (tíri), and we conclude, from this, that the second noun simply possesses the first; or, in other words, that the first noun belongs, or pertains to the second. The second noun being thus the possessor, source, or origin of the first, must have its relationship signalized by being put in the so-called genitive case (tíri.) “Ceann tíri” means, therefore, *a head, end, or terminus* belonging, or pertaining to the land — “*land’s end*” — as distinguished from a *head, end, or terminus* belonging, or pertaining to any thing else. “Ceann sráidi,” in like manner, means the *head, terminus, or end of\* a street*. But the nominative case plural of these nouns is formed exactly the same as their genitive case singular; thus, “tíri” means *lands*, and “sráidi” means *streets*.

When the final consonant of the noun to be inflected is broad, instead of slender, the office of the genitive suffix, *i*, is to make that consonant slender in the genitive case; consequently the *i*, in this instance, is not suffixed, but *infixed*. Thus, “cuas,” *a cave*, forms its genitive “cuais” (not “cuasi.”); “ceol,” *music*, forms its genitive “ceoil” (not “ceoli.”); and “aol,” *lime*, forms its genitive “aoil” (not “aoli.”) It is in the inflection of nouns of this

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\*There are, in English, two ways of expressing what in Gaelic is known as the genitive relation. According to the native Saxon method, as has already been shown, the possessing noun is indicated by the suffixed consonant's: as “the sun's disk”; “the moon's sphere”; “the mountain's top.” According to the other method, which has been borrowed from the French, the possessing noun is denoted by having prefixed to it the preposition “of”; as “the disk of the sun”; “the sphere of the moon”; “the top of the mountain.” This preposition “of,” which, grammatically considered, governs the following noun in the objective case, expresses the same idea of genitiveness or possession that in Gaelic and most other languages is indicated by a special suffix. Now, the question naturally suggests itself, how it is that the

class, then, that the “triphthong of inflection,” above referred to, is formed. When the final consonant of a noun in the nominative case is preceded by a diphthong, we see how that diphthong becomes a triphthong by the addition of the infixed *i* of the genitive case.

Most of the Gaelic diphthongs, however, when they take this attenuating *i* after them, cannot stand in their triphthongal forms. Under the influence of the infixed *i*, they become excessively attenuated, sometimes dwindling down to single vowels, and sometimes disappearing altogether. For example, the diphthong *ia* is reduced to *é*; thus “*grian*,” *the sun*, becomes “*gréin*” (not “*griain*”): and “*ciall*,” *sense*, becomes “*céill*,” (not “*ciaill*.”) There are only five diphthongs which resist this excessive attenuation; namely, *ua*, *ao*, *eo*, *iu*, *éa*. The other diphthongs suffer modification, as may be seen from the following:—

1. The diphthong *ia* is reduced to *é*; thus:

“*grian*” becomes “*gréin*,” not “*griain*.”

2. The diphthongs *éa* (*eu*) and *ío* drop the consonant vowel; thus:

preposition and the suffix can have the same signification? This can be answered only by assuming that the suffix, which is now indeed anomalous, was originally a preposition; and this we shall find scientifically to be the case. The only difference, in fact, between the preposition and the suffix is, that the latter is retained at the end of the noun, instead of being placed at the beginning, and points to a time in the development of language when all those particles which we now call prepositions were placed at the end of the nouns they governed. According to this view of the matter, then, we see how such genitive expressions as “*ceann tiri*,” *land’s end*, and “*ceann sraid*,” *street’s end*, may be resolved into the more intelligible “*ceann i dtir*,” i. e., *end in a land*, and “*ceann i sraid*,” i. e., *end in a street*.

The student should here remember that the inflectional *i* when final is, in the modern language, changed to *e*: as “*tire*,” “*sraide*,” and is retained in the plural of dissyllabic nouns ending in a liquid, *lnr*, in which case the *i* is long—and the long *i* and the short *e* are never commutable. Examples: “*míorbhail*,” a miracle, plural “*míorbhailí*”; “*caillín*,” a girl, plural “*cailíní*”; “*fioghdoir*,” a weaver, plural “*fioghdoirí*.”



“sgeul” becomes “sgéil,” not “sgeuil” or “sgeail.”  
 “síol” “síl,” “síoil” “síl.”

3. The three short diphthongs ea, eo, and iu drop both vowels; thus:

“fear” becomes “fir,” not “feair.”  
 “deoch” “digh” “deoich.”  
 “fiuch” “flich” “fliuch.”

In the old language, the diphthong ao (also written ae and oe) dropped one of its vowels; thus “maor,” “maer,” or “moer” became “mair” or “moir,” instead of the modern “maoir,” “maeir,” or “moeir.” And this, it should be noted, is in strict accordance with the modern pronunciation, where, as we have seen, the ao loses its diphthongal sound in its triphthongal or attenuated form.

#### DIPHTHONGS OF INFLECTION.

In the same manner as triphthongs are formed in the process of inflection of some nouns so also are diphthongs formed. If the final consonant of a noun in the nominative case is immediately preceded by a single broad vowel, a o or u, and the attenuating i is inserted in forming the genitive case, it gives rise to the diphthong ai, oi, or ui. For example, “bád,” *a boat*, becomes in the genitive case “báid:” “pórt,” *a harbor*, becomes “póirt:” and “dún,” *a fort*, becomes “dúin.” When the broad vowel of the nominative is long (accented), as in the above words, it resists the modifying influence of the attenuating i; but when the vowel is short it suffers a decided modification. The vowels a and o are both changed to u (the sound of u being naturally more attenuated than that of a or o) while the vowel u itself remains unchanged. Thus “brat,” *a mantle*, becomes

“bruit,” (not “brait”) and “port,” *a tune*, becomes “puirt” (not “poirt.”)

This change of the broad vowel of the nominative is, in reality, only a method of showing that the infixed *i* is prominent in the newly-formed diphthong. Hence it is that some Gaelic writers do not change the broad vowel (*a* or *o*) of the nominative at all: and with very good reason, for it is generally understood that the *i* is always, with few exceptions, the prominent vowel in a *short* diphthong of inflection.

In the Munster dialect, the infixed *i* is long in a monosyllabic word ending in *ll* or *nn*; as “crann,” *a tree*, gen. “crainn” (or “cruinn”), *pron. kreen*. “poll,” *a hole*, gen. “poill” (or “puill”), *pron. pueel*. (See page 10.)

The student will not fail to recognize in the internal change of words in Gaelic something similar to the inflection which in English changes *mouse* into *mice*, *man* into *men*, *strike* into *stroke*, *break* into *broke*, etc. In Gaelic the internal vowel change is, however, governed by rule, while in English it is not governed by rule.

## VOCABULARY.

The following vocabulary, which is composed of both monosyllables and dissyllables, is intended to give further illustration of the sounds of the five triphthongs. The two triphthongs *iu* and *ia* are found in only a few words.

uair, *an hour; time*.

gruaim, *surliness, gloom*.

duais, *a reward*.

saoi, *a sage*.

baois, *folly*.

draoi, *a druid, wizard*.

suairc, *pleasant, joyful*.

uain, *leisure; time*.

stuaim, *steadiness, sobriety*.

caoin, *gentle, mild*.

aois, *an age*.

dao, *a dullard*.

|                                       |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| beoir, <i>beer</i> .                  | neoin, <i>evening; noon</i> .       |
| treoir, <i>guidance</i> .             | feoil, <i>meat, flesh</i> .         |
| deoin, <i>will, consent</i> .         | geoin, <i>tumult, noise</i> .       |
| stuiir, <i>a steer</i> .              | biall, <i>an axe</i> .              |
| ciuin, <i>silent, still</i> .         | spiaire, <i>a spy</i> .             |
| tuairim, <i>impression, opinion</i> . | cluaireán, <i>mumbling</i> .        |
| tuairisg, <i>tidings</i> .            | uaine, <i>green</i> .               |
| cluain, <i>a lawn, glade</i> .        | cuaiseud <i>a closet</i> .          |
| daoirse, <i>bondage, slavery</i> .    | calaois, <i>cheat, guile</i> .      |
| saoirse, <i>freedom, liberty</i> .    | caoine, <i>a lament</i> .           |
| maoilinn, <i>a knoll</i> .            | faoileann, <i>a sea gul</i> .       |
| feoirinn, <i>a farthing</i> .         | breoite, <i>sick</i> .              |
| dreoilín, <i>a wren</i> .             | coinnleoir, <i>a candle-stick</i> . |
| gleoite, <i>neat, nice</i> .          | gleoisín, <i>a prattler</i> .       |

### EXERCISE IV.

1. Tá an uain fuar. 2. Tá tú ceart: tá an uain fuar agus fliuch. 3. Tá an brat uaine agus tá an crann árd. 4. Tá daoirse olc agus tá saoirse suairc. 5. Feoil úr agus an cat bán. 6. Tá an cat bán breoite. 7. Fear ciuin, bád agus an stuiir. 8. Cluaireán síor, fear críon agus feoirinn. 9. Coinnleoir árd. 10. Tá calaois olc. 11. Cnoc árd agus ceo, maoilinn agus cluain. 12. Tá an tuairisg olc. 13. Tá an draoi glic. 14. Tá an sgeul fíor. 15. Beoir agus gruaim agus cluaireán síor. 16. An dreoilín binn. 17. Tá an ceol suairc. 18. Tá tú ceart: tá sé binn, suairc. 19. Ait árd. 20. Tá an áit árd glan agus tá an dún mór ársa. 21. Cnoc agus maoilinn lom. 22. Cnoc árd. 23. Tá an cnoc ceannárd.

24. Baois a's mórtus, bórd a's cat,

Draoi a's rós deas, brón a's brat.

25. Gruaim a's daoirse, saoirse 's siur,

Cluain deas, mín, agus maoilinn úr.

26. Tá 'n mála lán,  
Tá 'n capall bán,  
Tá 'n giusta borb,  
A's tá 'n colm fann.

27. Tá 'n dán deas, gleoite,  
An sgeol 's an bárd;  
Tá 'n cat bán breoite,  
'S tá 'n rós ceannárd.

*Translation.*

1. The weather (*time*) is cold. 2. You are right: the weather is cold and wet. 3. The cloak is green and the tree is tall. 4. Slavery is bad and freedom is pleasant. 5. Fresh meat and the white cat. 6. The white cat is sick. 7. A reticent (*silent*) man, a boat and the steer. 8. Perpetual mumbling, a decrepit man and a farthing. 9. A tall candlestick. 10. Guile is bad. 11. A high hill and mist, a knoll and a lawn. 12. The account (*tidings*) is bad. 13. The druid is cunning. 14. The story is true. 15. Beer and surliness and perpetual mumbling. 16. The melodious wren. 17. The music is pleasant. 18. You are right: it is melodious *and* pleasant. 19. A high place. 20. The high place is clean and the large fort is ancient. 21. A bare hill and knoll. 22. A high hill. 23. The hill is prominent (*lit. high-headed.*) (Nos. 24, 25, 26 and 27 are in metre.)

Translate the Following twelve Sentences into Gaelic.

1. The cat is young. 2. The tree is green. 3. Fresh bread is sweet. 4. The cat and the dove are white and the horse is black. 5. It is bad. 6. He is cunning. 7. She is pretty. 8. We are right. 9. They are white. 10. The tall grass is green. 11. The young horse is sick and he is weak and weary. 12. A white thing is clean.



# ASPIRATION AND ECLIPSIS.

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## LESSON V.

### I. ASPIRATION, OR, MUTABLE CONSONANTS.

The nine mutable consonants — b, c, d, f, g, m, p, s, t, — are so called because they lose their radical sounds or timbres and assume other sounds *apparently* foreign to themselves. In this altered condition they are called *aspirates*, and are distinguished by having an *h* placed immediately after them; thus bh, ch, dh, fh, gh, mh, ph, sh, th\* (See remarks on the letter *h*, page 2.) The secondary, or aspirate, sounds which these consonants assume may be gathered from the following: —

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\*The consonants that are aspirated at present were un-aspirated, or radical, in ancient times; and this holds true not only of Gaelic, but of every language in which aspirated consonants occur. The modern English word "church," in Anglo-Saxon or Old English, was spelt and pronounced "cure," with the c radical, like k; and this old pronunciation yet lives in the Scottish "kirk." The aspirate sound of a consonant is, in reality, a corruption of its radical sound; nevertheless, in some instances, the derivative aspirate sound has been accorded the rank and title of an independent alphabetic consonant. The aspirate sound of a consonant in English and most modern languages, is denoted by having an *h* postfixed to the radical consonant thus changed or corrupted. In English, there are, at present, five consonants the aspirate sounds of which are indicated in this way. These are c, g, p, s, t. The radical, or alphabetic, sounds of these consonants are exemplified in the words "can," "rug," "pant," "sip," "tan,"; and their aspirate, or secondary, sounds are exemplified in the words "chant," "rough," "phantom," "ship," "than." In some languages, as in Greek, the aspirate sounds of old radicals are denoted by having new letters invented to represent them, and consequently they are looked upon as independent consonants in writing. Thus in

## Bh and Mh.

Bh and Mh both take the sound of *v*, with the following modifications :

I. Bh, or mh, *broad*, sounds like *v* broad or thick (which sound approaches that of *w* at the beginning of a word or syllable); as “dubh,” *black* (*pron. dhuv*); “lámh,” *a hand* (*pron. lauv*); “garbh,” *rough* (*pron. garuv*); “talamh,” *land* (*pron. thalav*); — “a bhórd,” *his table* (*pron. a voardh* or *a woardh*); “a mhac,” *his son* (*pron. a vak* or *a wak*); — “gabháil,” *conquest* (*pron. ga-vauil* or *ga-wauil*); “amháin,” *only* (*pron. a-vauin* or *a-wauin*.)

Greek, for instance, the guttural *ch* has a special letter to represent it, made in the shape of an *x*. So also have the *ph* and *th* each a special letter, bearing no resemblance in shape or form to the radical letter from which it has been phonetically derived. In Hebrew, also, the aspirates have new letters to express their sounds; but in all cases the new aspirate letters, in Hebrew, bear a striking resemblance, in form, to their primitive radicals, of which they are modifications graphically as well as phonetically. The old English, or Anglo-Saxons, adopted the same expedient in regard to the Gaelic aspirates *bh*, *mh*, *dh gh*, *sh*, *th*. The aspirate sound of *bh* and *mh* they represented by *v*, (sometimes by *w*, which is but a broadening of the *v* sound), and the aspirate sound of *dh* and *gh* they represented by *y*. The aspirates *sh* and *th* they represented by *h*. Thus the English word “worry” is an obvious corruption of an older form in which the initial *w* is either a *b* or an *m*, and the final *y* either a *d* or a *g*. Now, this ancient form we find well preserved in the Gaelic “buaireadh,” pronounced very nearly “borry”; but when the initial, under certain circumstances, is aspirated, it is pronounced “vorry,” or, according to the Connacht method, “worry.” The English pronoun “he,” in like manner, presupposes an older form in which the initial *h* is either an *s* or a *t* (it might also be a *ch*, as we shall see later on); and this form we find preserved in the Gaelic “se,” the masculine pronoun of the third person.

The aspirate sounds of radical consonants are undoubtedly best denoted by having attached to the radicals themselves a conventional mark (such as the *h* or the dot), or else by having their form so slightly altered as not to disguise the original identity; such, for instance, as the *W* and the *M* in German, and most of the aspirates and the radicals in Hebrew. The *h* as a mark of aspiration in Gaelic print, has been objected to as occurring too frequently, and as occupying too much space. For this very reason, the scribes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries omitted the *h* altogether and instead placed a point or “dot” over the aspirated consonant. The dot in all such cases, however, only indicated the omission of the *h*; for it was used by the old scribes in the same capacity as that in which the apostrophe is used at present (see foot-note, page 37.) The general use of the dot, instead of the *h*,

II. Bh, or mh, preceded by a (short) and followed by another short vowel, or a consonant, has, in the FIRST syllable of a word, the vowel sound of *u* in *rule*; which, in union with the preceding *a*, produces a diphthongal sound like *au* in German or *ow* in the English word *power*; as “gabhar,” a goat (*pron. gower*); “ramhar,”

in modern Gaelic print, while it saves time and space, does not lessen one iota the objections that are urged against the whole system of aspiration. Too many dots are as objectionable, and are as embarrassing to the eye, as too many h's. The mutables *b*, *m*, *d*, *g*, occur so frequently in their aspirated condition, that the radical sounds of these letters outside of the initials of words—which are never aspirated—is the exception rather than the rule. It were far more convenient, therefore, to mark or dot the *b*, *m*, *d*, *g*, when radical than to have them, as they now are, marked in every case in which they are aspirated. Any one of these four mutables, in Old Gaelic, whenever it did not form the initial consonant of a word, was understood to bear its aspirated sound; and whenever it got the exceptional radical sound, the letter was doubled. The double mutable consonant, therefore, represented the radical sound, the single mutable consonant the aspirate sound. This ingenious method of treating aspiration, which dispenses with two-thirds of the number of h's, or dots, used in modern Gaelic books, is observable in the most ancient manuscripts we possess. In order, therefore, that the student may be enabled to read those manuscripts and published works of ancient Gaelic, the system of aspiration which is found in them is given concisely as follows:

The aspirate sound of *bh* is represented by a single *b*, and the radical sound of the same letter is represented by *pp* (or *bb*); while the aspirate sound of *p* itself is represented by *ph*, and the radical sound by a single *p*. The aspirate sound of *dh* is represented by a single *d*, and the radical sound by *tt*; while the aspirate sound of *t* itself is represented by *th*, and the radical sound by a single *t*. The aspirate sound of *gh* is represented by a single *g*, and the radical sound by *cc*; while the aspirate sound of *c* itself is represented by *ch*, and the radical sound by a single *c*.

The letter *s* is never aspirated in the middle or at the end of a word, hence a single *s*, in whatever position, has always the radical sound.

The letters *f* and *p* are practically initial letters; hence whenever either of these consonants occurs in the middle of a word, as is frequently the case in the Ogham inscriptions, it represents the aspirate *bh*. The *ff*, in like manner, represents the aspirate *mh*. In most manuscript works the aspirate *mh* is, of course, represented by a single *m*, and the radical sound by *mm*. When, however, the single *m* is immediately preceded by *l*, *n*, *r*, *s*, or *ch*, it is radical in sound. The mutables *b* and *d* are also radical in this position.

The letter *t* is practically an initial letter also; hence in some old manuscripts it is employed, instead of *tt*, in the middle and at the end of words, to represent the softer sound of *d* radical. When, however, the *t* is immediately preceded by *l*, *n*, *r*, *s*, or *ch*, it has its radical or initial sound.

The initial euphonic aspiration, which is so prevalent in modern Gaelic text, either did not obtain so frequently in the older text, or else it was, on account of its transient nature, entirely ignored.

*plump* (pron. *rower*); "*leabhar*," a *book* (pron. *l'ower*); "*meamhair*," *memory* (pron. *m'ow-ir*); "*feabhra*," *February* (pron. *f'owra*); "*samhra*," *Summer* (pron. *sowra*). — Bh, or mh, in the same position, in the SECOND syllable of a word, or when immediately preceded by l, n, r, † has the pure vowel sound of *u* in *rule*, or that of *w* in *renewal*; as "*duilleabhar*," *foliage* (pron. *dhu-lure*); "*fearamhail*," *manly* (pron. *f'a-rule*); "*gealbhan*," a *sparrow* (pron. *g'a-loon*); "*ionmhain*," *dear* (pron. *in-noo'n*); "*Cearbhall*," *Carroll* (pron. *k'a-rule*.)

† A consonant immediately preceding or following the aspirate (bh or mh) is the result of syncopation. The word "*gealbhan*" is a syncopated form of "*gealabhan*," and "*samhra*" a syncopated form of "*samhara*." According to this view of the matter, then, we see that bh or mh is vocalized only when preceded and followed by a (short). The substance of Rule II., given above, might therefore be more concisely stated thus:—abha or amha in the first syllable of a word sounds like ow (or ou in our); in the second syllable it sounds like ew (or ou in your).

The diphthongal sound of ow (or ou) is not as natural to the Gaelic language as it is to the German. Hence in Gaelic the sound is permitted to exist only in the first syllable of a word, while in the second syllable it is reduced to the vowel sound of u. This elimination of the diphthongal sound has a few analogies even in English. Compare the words renounce and renunciation, denounce and denunciation, etc., and you will find that among the differences between them not the least important is the elimination of the diphthongal sound, ou. While this sound never occurs outside of the first syllable in a Gaelic word, there are, on the contrary, two words in common use in which the sound is eliminated (i. e. reduced to u) even in the first syllable. These are "*tabhairt*," to give (pron. *thoo-irt*) and "*abhall*," an apple (pron. *ool*). But, however, when these words take a suffix and become dissyllables, the diphthongal sound is heard; as "*tabharthas*," a gift (pron. *thow-arhas*); "*abhall-ghort*," an orchard (pron. *owl-'orth*.)

It may be well to inform the learner that the vowel sound of bh or mh is a modern development. In the old language these aspirates were invariably articulated (like v) in positions where, in the spoken language of the present day, they get the simple sound of u or the compound sound of ou. The old pronunciation prevailed longer in Munster than in any of the other provinces, and even as late as the latter half of the last century Gaelic speakers of Cork and Kerry were noted for their tendency to articulate the bh and mh in the two positions mentioned in Rule II. Thus "*gabhar*," a goat, was pronounced *ga-var* (in two syllables), and "*fearamhail*," manly, was pronounced *far-ra-vhil* (in three syllables). Even at the present day this old pronunciation is sometimes heard, but it is confined mainly to poetry. There is, however, one word in common use—viz., "*amharc*," a glance—which gives a good example of the articulated aspirate, the word being universally pronounced, as far as I know, in two syllables—a-vark (not owark).



III. Bh, or mh, preceded by o or u and followed by another short vowel, or a consonant, is silent (like *w* in *olowing*), in which case the preceding o or u is sounded long; as “comharsa,” *a neighbor* (pron. *koarsa*); “subhach,” *cheerful* (pron. *sooch*); “umhal,” *humble* (pron. *ool*); “subhlach,” *juice* (pron. *soo-lach*); “cumhra,” *fragrant* (pron. *koo-ra*.)\*

IV. Bh, or mh, preceded or followed by a long vowel or syllable, is always articulated (like *v* in Munster, like *w* † in Connacht), and forms the first letter of the following syllable; as “crábhadh,” *piety*, (pron. *krau-va* or *krau-wa*); “diamhar,” *deep, mystic* (pron. *dea-var* or *dea-war*); “faobhar,” *edge* (pron. *fhay-var* or *fhay-war*); — “gabháil,” *conquest* (pron. *ga-vau’l* or *ga-wau’l*); “subháilce,” *virtue* (pron. *su-vau’l-ke* or *su-wau’l-ke*); “amháin,” *only* (pron. *a-vau’n* or *a-wau’n*); “díomhaoín,” *idle* (pron. *dee-vheen* or *dee-ween*.)

\* In the Munster dialect the bh and mh are quiescent not only after o and u, but also after the vowel i and long a and the long diphthongs ao, ia, ua, in a few words of common use; as “deimhin,” *certain* (pron. *dine*); “Eibhlin,” *Ellen* (pron. *ileen*); “faobhar,” *edge* (pron. *faor*); “cliabhain,” *a son-in-law* (pron. *klean*); “uamhar,” *pride* (pron. *oo-ar*.) When, however, the following vowel or diphthong is long the aspirate is sounded as it always ought to be. [See Rule IV.]

† It may be well here to state that in speaking English some Irishmen give the English *w* the more radical sound of *v*. Thus “will” is pronounced “vill,” and “wine” is pronounced “vine”; but in compensation for this the *v* is in other words sounded like *w*; thus “vine” is pronounced “wine,” and “voice” is pronounced “wice.” The *wh* in some words gets the sound of *f* or *ph*; as “when,” pronounced *fen*; “where,” pronounced “fere”; but in compensation for this the *f* is, in other words, sounded like *wh*; as “fine,” pronounced “whine,” “fight,” pronounced “whight,” etc. This interchange of elemental sounds between two words is one of the most important phenomena in language. It is well illustrated in the Cockney dialect, in which the *h* is omitted from words to which it naturally belongs and inserted in other words to which it does not belong; thus “horse” becomes “’orse,” and “oats” becomes “hoats.” From this it will be seen that when a sound disappears from one word it reappears in another, and thus we have a veritable law of compensation; so that no elemental sound is absolutely lost. This conservation of sound in language bears a striking resemblance to what, in the physical world, is known as the conservation of matter.

V. Bh or mh, *slender*, sounds like *v* slender or thin; as "luibh," *an herb* (pron. *lu'v*); "nimh," *poison* (pron. *niv*); "aoibhinn," *delightful* (pron. *ee-vin*); "sgribhinn," *a writing* (pron. *shgree-vin*); "doimhin," *deep* (pron. *dho-vin*); "deimhin," *certain* (pron. *devin*.)

### Ch.

Ch takes a hissing guttural sound, like the German *ch*, with the following modifications:

I. Ch, *broad*, has a rough or explosive guttural sound like *ch* in *loch*; as "loch," *a lake*; "luch," *a mouse*; "macha," *a plain*; "lacha," *a duck*; "mullach," *a summit*.

II. Ch, *slender*, has, in the beginning of a word, a light guttural, or rather palatal sound, like *h* in *hue*; as "a chiall," *his sense*; "a cheann," *his head*. In the middle and end of a word it sounds more like the aspirate *h* in Munster; as "fiche," *twenty* (pron. *fhe*); "seiche," *a hide* (pron. *shehe*)<sup>‡</sup>; but in Connacht the analogical palatal sound is heard as in German.

### Dh and Gh.

Dh and Gh both take the sound of *y*, with the following modifications:

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<sup>‡</sup> The *h* is a natural secondary, or aspirate, sound of the *ch*. Most of the *h*'s that appear in modern languages can be traced to the radical *c* (or *k*) of more ancient (i. e., better preserved) languages. Thus, for instance, the Latin word "caput" is more primitive and far better preserved than the German "Haupt," which is a corruption of it; and the Gaelic word "cura" is more primitive than the English "hero." In both these instances we find the radical *c* dwindling down into the aspirate *h*. Nearly all the *h*'s in Hebrew are traceable to the *c* (or *k*); and the old Assyrian language, of which the Hebrew is only a corrupt dialect, still holds the radical guttural where, in Hebrew, we find the aspirate *h*. We have, then, three radical consonants, *s*, *t*, and *c*, any one of which may be the origin of the modern *h*.

I. Dh or gh, *broad*, when a consonant—which it always is at the beginning of a word—sounds like *y* broad or thick; as “mo dhán,” *my poem* (pron. *mu yhaun*); “mo ghort,” *my field* (pron. *mu yhorth*.)

II. Dh or gh preceded by a (short) and followed by a vowel or consonant, has, in the FIRST syllable of a word, the vowel sound of *i* in *machine*; which, in union with the preceding a, produces a diphthongal sound, like *ai* in *aisle*; as “adharc,” *a horn* (pron. *eye-ark*); “radharc,” *sight* (pron. *rye-ark*); “Tadhg,” *Timothy* (pron. *thyg*); “Sadhbh,” *Sabia* (pron. *seyev*.)

—Dh or gh in the same position in the SECOND syllable of a word, or when immediately preceded by d, l, n, r, has the pure vowel sound of *i* in *machine*; as “ealadha,” *science* (pron. *al-lee-a*); “feadghal,” *whistling* (pron. *fa-dhee-al*); “loilgheach,” *a milch cow* (pron. *lo-lee-ach*); “inghean,” *a daughter* (pron. *in-nee-an*); “garrdha,” *a garden* (pron. *gar-ree-a*)\*

—When the preceding a is long (accented) the dh or gh is treated as a silent consonant; as “sádhail,” *pleasure* (pron. *saw-il*); “brágha,” *a breast* (pron. *braw*.)

\*The substance of Rule II., as given above, might be more concisely stated thus: Dh or gh in the first syllable of a word, has the vowel sound of *y* in “eye”; in the second syllable it has the vowel sound of *y* in “Assyria.” Another way still in which the rule might be stated would be: adh(a) or agh(a) in the first syllable of words, sounds like *ai* in “aisle”; in the second syllable it sounds like single *i*. From this it will be seen that the diphthongal sound of *ai*, like the diphthongal sound of *ou* (for which see footnote, page 55) cannot stand in the second syllable of a Gaelic word.

According to the modern orthography, the aspirate dh or gh, when it occurs outside the first syllable of a word, is not a vowel; in this position it is generally treated as a silent consonant; and, to account for the vowel sound, the vowel *i* is inserted before it; thus “ealadha” is now generally written “ealaidhe.” The old plural ending “adha” is now always written “idhe.” Hence such old plural forms as “maladha,” bags, and “fileadha,” poets, are now written “malaidhe,” “filidhe,” etc.

In the old language, the aspirates dh and gh did not have precisely the same sound, except at the beginning of words. While the gh was sounded as *y* (vowel or consonant) as indicated in the above rules, the dh was, in the

III. Dh or gh, preceded by o or u and followed by a vowel or consonant, is silent: in which case the preceding o or u is sounded long; as “bodhar,” *deaf* (pron. *boar*); “rogha,” *a choice* (pron. *roa*); “foghlaim,” *learning* (pron. *foal-lim* †); “pudhair,” *blemish* (pron. *poo-ir*); “ughdar,” *an author* (pron. *oo-dhar*). [In this case, it is the contiguity of the vowel following the silent aspirate, and not the silent aspirate itself, that helps to lengthen the preceding o or u.]

—Dh or gh preceded by a long diphthong is also silent, but the increase in the quantity of the preceding diphthong, occasioned by the following vowel, is not in this case as perceptible as it is in the case of the preceding o or u. Examples: “saoghal,” *the world*; “buadhach,” *victorious*; “criadhaire,” *a laborer*; “Eoghan,” *Eugene*; “léigheann,” *literature*; “fíoghar,” *a figure*; “cáidheach,” *volluted*; “óighe,” *virgins*; “túidhean,” *a tunic*; “liughadh,” *screaming*.

IV. Dh or gh, *slender*, when a consonant, is sounded like *y* slender or thin; as “mo dheoin,” *my consent*; “mo gheug,” *my arm*.

V. Dh or gh preceded by i and followed by a vowel or consonant, is silent, causing the preceding i to be

middle of words, sounded like the aspirate h, or th. Hence in old manuscripts the dh is often written where, in modern texts, the th would be used.

In Connacht, the aspirate dh or gh, when immediately followed by l, m, n, or r, in the first syllable of words, is treated as a silent consonant, the preceding a being long in sound; as “adhlacadh,” *burial*, (pron. *aw-laka*); “adhmaid,” *timber* (pron. *aw-mudh*); “adhradh,” *adoration* (pron. *aw-ra*.) Such words as these, however, are only syncopated forms and should follow the general rule.

† In the Munster dialect, the vowel o in this position, gets the diphthongal sound of ou (or ow); as “bodhar” (pron. *bower*); “rogha” (pron. *row*); “foghlaim” (pron. *fowlim*.)



sounded long; as “slighe,” *a way*; “dlighe,” *a law*; “croidhe,” *a heart*; “feidhm,” *an effort*; “buidhe,” *yellow*.\*

VI. Dh or gh final is absolutely silent, and has no influence over the preceding vowel; as “margadh,” *a bargain* (pron. *mar-ga*); “magadh,” *mockery* (pron. *ma-ga*); “deireadh,” *an end* (pron. *der-ré*); “samhradh,” *Summer* (pron. *sow-ra*); “grádh,” *love* (pron. *graw*); “traigh,” *a strand* (pron. *traw*); “fáidh,” *a prophet* (pron. *faw*); “troigh,” *a foot* (pron. *thro’* or *thri’*); “iarraidh,” *asking* (pron. *ear-ri* or *ear-ra*); “Eochaidh,” *Hugo* (pron. *ochi* or *ocha*).†

### Fh.

Fh is always silent, but the vowel or consonant following it is forcibly sounded; as “mairt-fheoil,” *beef* (pron. *ma’rt owil*); “muic-fheoil,” *pork* (pron. *mu’k owil*.) Fh is never final in a word, nor does it occur in the middle of any word except a compound.

\*The vowel *i* is not lengthened before a silent aspirate, when it occurs in any of the triphthongs *uai*, *iai*, *eoí*, *iui*, or in any of the improper diphthongs when the accompanying prominent vowel is long; as in the words “leigh-eann,” *literature*; “caidheach,” *polluted*; “oighe,” *virgins*; etc. When the prominent vowel is short, then the *i* becomes long, sometimes—as in *ei*—assuming the diphthongal sound of *i* in the English word “fire.”

The other exception to this rule are passive participles of verbs of the second conjugation ending in “ighthe,” in which termination the *i* is always short; as “arduighthe,” *elevated*, “orduighthe,” *ordered*.

†In West Munster, the *dh* or *gh* final is often sounded like *g* (hard). This generally occurs when a word ending in *dh* or *gh* is followed by another word beginning with a vowel, in which case it becomes necessary that the silent letter at the end of the preceding word should assume its consonantal sound to prevent a hiatus. Now, it is impossible to maintain the *y* sound, as a consonant, at the end of a word, hence the cognate sound of *g* (radical) given to the *dh* or *gh* final. Examples: “Feadh na h-oidheche,” *throughout the night* (pron. *fa na heeche*); “feadh an lae,” *throughout the day* (pron. *fag an lbay*); “d’imthigh na fir,” *the men went* (pron. *dimmi na fir*); “d’imthigh an fear” *the man went* (pron. *dimmig an far*.) The proper sound of *dh* or *gh*, in this situation, is a light guttural, partaking both of the consonantal

## Ph.

Ph takes the sound of *ph* or *f*; as “a phus,” *his lip*; “a phort,” *his tune*.

## Sh and Th.

Sh and th both take the sound of *h*; as “shuas,” *above* (*pron. hoo-as*); “brathair,” *a brother* (*pron. braw-hir.*) Sh never ends a word, and occurs in the middle of compounds only. The letter *s* never admits of being aspirated except when followed by a vowel or an immutable consonant (*l, n, r.*) Th final is faintly sounded, except when the following word begins with a vowel.

sound of *y* and the aspirate sound of *h*. This sound the student can easily arrive at, by pronouncing the *dh* or *gh* final as if it formed the initial letter of the following word, somewhat after the manner of the French “*liaison*.”

In Connacht, the hiatus is avoided, not by articulating the final aspirate of the preceding word, but by lengthening the vowel immediately preceding that aspirate; as “*d’imthigh an fear*,” (*pron. dim-mee an far.*) This method of preventing a hiatus is sometimes used in English. The definite article, “*the*,” for instance, when placed before a word beginning with a consonant, has the vowel *e* very short in sound; as “*the man*,” “*the book*,” “*the time*”; but when placed before a word beginning with a vowel, there is a perceptible lengthening of the *e* sound, to prevent a hiatus; as “*the ocean*,” “*the altar*,” “*the air*.” From this we see, then, that when two vowels come together, there are two ways of preventing a hiatus between them; viz., (1) By lengthening one of the vowels (generally the preceding one); (2) by interposing a consonantal sound.

The aspirate *dh* is always employed at the end of certain tenses of the verb, and in this position it would seem to demand a decided consonantal articulation, whether the following word begin with a vowel or not. In the past indefinite (or habitual) tense, it sounds like *ch*; as “*do bhuailleadh se*,” he used to strike; “*do ghlanadh se*,” he used to clean. In the past tense, definite, of the Passive Voice (which is the same in form as the past indefinite of the Active Voice, with the exception of the absence of the initial aspiration) it sounds like *g* (hard) in most parts of Munster, but in the county Kerry it sounds like *mh*, and sometimes like *ch*; as “*do bhuailleadh e*,” he was struck; “*do glanadh e*,” it was cleaned. In Connacht, the *dh* at the end of a verb gets no consonantal sound whatever, but, as above stated, the preceding vowel is lengthened in sound, the vowel *a* being sounded like *u*; as “*do bhuailleadh e*,” he was struck (*pron. dhu boo-loo a.*)

Aspiration, in the sense in which it is used here, means the *softening* of the radical sound of a consonant, for the sake of euphony or ease of utterance. When two words are united in forming a compound, the second usually suffers a softening or aspiration of its initial consonant (if that consonant be of the aspirable or mutable class.) Thus “treun,” *noble* and “croidhe,” *a heart*, form the compound “treun-chroidheach,” *noble-hearted*: in which the initial c of “croidhe” suffers aspiration, to enable the two words to blend together more smoothly and form a composite whole. So also “mór-chroidheach,” *big-hearted*; “geur-shúileach,” *sharp-eyed*. When the second part of the compound begins with d or t, and the first part ends in d, t, s, l, or n, aspiration does not take place, as the blending of these lingual letters is considered euphonic enough without aspiration.

The necessity of *euphony* in language is the main cause of aspiration. There is, however, another necessity, equally urgent, which occasions aspiration — generally of the final consonant of a word — and that is the necessity of *differentiation*. The adjective “anamh,” *rare*, for instance, has been differentiated from the noun “anam,” *a soul*, by having the final consonant aspirated; and the noun “cath,” *a battle*, has been differentiated from the noun “cat,” *a cat*, in the same way. When, therefore, a word has been differentiated in meaning, a corresponding differentiation must take place in its sound, and this is conveniently brought about by aspirating one of its consonants.

The initial consonant of a word is never aspirated either for the sake of euphony or differentiation. All Gaelic words, then, *taken individually*, have their initials radical. There are a few words which appear with affected initials such as “shuas,” *above*, “shíos,” *below*, and “chum,” *to* or

*for*; but these affected consonants are not the real initials of those words, which are but corruptions of the older compounds “ba-shuas,” “ba-shíos,” “do-chum.”

The sound which an aspirate consonant has in a simple or primitive word does not change when the simple word forms part of a compound or derivative. The compound “glan-radharcach,” *clear-sighted*, is pronounced *glan-rey-erkach* (not *glan-reerkach*); and “deagh-labhartha,” *well-spoken*, is pronounced *da-lowrha* (not *da-loorha*.) The exception to this rule are primitive words ending in bh or mh preceded by r, o, or u. The primitive “garbh,” *rough*, is pronounced *garav*, but the derivative “garbhas” comes under the general rule, being pronounced *ga-roos* (not *gar-vas*.) The primitive “dubh,” *black*, is pronounced *dhuv*, but the derivative “úr-dhubhadh,” *obscuration*, is pronounced *oor-yhoo* (not *oor-yhuva*.) Under this head, also, may be classed proper nouns and verbs ending in dh or gh, which, when they take an additional syllable in the course of inflection, change the vowel a of the last syllable into u; as “Murchadh,” *Murcha*, “mac Murchudha,” (genitive) *son of Murcha*; “árdaigh,” *elevate*, “árdughadh,” *elevation*.

## II. ECLIPSIS.

Eclipsis is the complete or partial suppression of the sound of a consonant by the influence of another consonant of softer timbre placed immediately before it; as appears in the combination *mn* in *hymn*, *condemn*, and *mb* in *lamb*, *limb*, etc. This suppression of the sound of the second consonant by the influence of the first, is called, in the old Gaelic grammars, “úr-dhubhadh,” which word literally means *obscuration* or *eclipsis*. There are in Gaelic eight combinations of eclipsis; viz.,

mb, gc, nd, bhf, ng, bp, dt, (ts).



The letter n does not completely eclipse the letter g, as both consonants are distinctly sounded, like *ng* in *song*. The combination *nd* has the force of *nn*.

A combination of eclipsis, like aspiration, never appears at the beginning of an individual word, and never at the end except *ng*, and in the old manuscripts *nd*, now represented by *nn*. Eclipsis, therefore, takes place when words are compounded, but it is generally confined to cases where words are compounded with the negative prefix "eu," *not*; as "eugcóir," *injustice* (from "eu," *not* and "cóir," *justice*); "eudtrom," *light* (from "eu," *not* and "trom," *heavy*.) The negative particle "dí," which, like all such prefixes, has the power of causing aspiration, causes eclipsis when the following consonant is a b; as "díombuan," *transient* (from "dí," *not* and "buan," *lasting*.) The privative "an," eclipses the consonant f and aspirates all others; as "ainbhíos," *ignorance* (from "an," *not* and "fíos," *knowledge*.) The English privative *in* causes a change somewhat like the Gaelic eclipsis; thus *in-possible* becomes *impossible*, *in-personal* becomes *impersonal*, and so forth.

Eclipsis, like aspiration, means the modification of the radical sound of a consonant from hard to soft. The main difference between these two modifications is, that one is a degree softer than the other. Aspiration is marked, as we have seen, by an h placed after, or a dot placed over, the consonant affected; and eclipsis is marked by having the consonant expressing the secondary sound placed before the consonant assuming that sound. Both aspiration and eclipsis, it will be seen, are based on the same principle—that of euphony, or ease of utterance—the difference between them being one of degree only.

VOCABULARY.

The following vocabulary is intended to illustrate the phenomena of Aspiration and Eclipsis. Every word therein given contains at least an aspirated or an eclipsed consonant.

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| lámh, <i>a hand.</i>                   | dubh, <i>black.</i>                  |
| sámh, <i>sedate.</i>                   | damh, <i>an ox.</i>                  |
| luach, <i>price, value.</i>            | seiche, <i>a hide.</i>               |
| breágh, <i>fine, beautiful.</i>        | sleagh, <i>a spear.</i>              |
| ádh, <i>luck.</i>                      | fleadh, <i>a feast.</i>              |
| traígh, <i>a strand.</i>               | troigh, <i>a foot.</i>               |
| cruaidh, <i>hard ; steel.</i>          | aghaidh, <i>a face.</i>              |
| ráth, <i>a rath.</i>                   | rath, <i>prosperity.</i>             |
| áth, <i>a ford.</i>                    | teith, <i>hot, warm.</i>             |
| dubhán, <i>a kidney.</i>               | abha, <i>a river.</i>                |
| sglábhaidhe, <i>a laborer.</i>         | cabhair, <i>help.</i>                |
| dubhach, <i>melancholy.</i>            | meabhair, <i>mind, mentality.</i>    |
| taobh, <i>a side.</i>                  | leabhar, <i>a book.</i>              |
| uamhan, <i>terror.</i>                 | lánamha, <i>a couple.</i>            |
| leamh, <i>raw, fresh.</i>              | leamhnacht, <i>fresh milk.</i>       |
| craoiseach, <i>a javelin.</i>          | bruighean, <i>feud, strife.</i>      |
| baoghal, <i>danger.</i>                | bliadhain, <i>a year.</i>            |
| buidhe, <i>yellow.</i>                 | laoigh-fheoil, <i>veal.</i>          |
| íomháigh, <i>image.</i>                | leath-phigin, <i>a half-penny.</i>   |
| láthair, <i>a site,</i>                | máthair, <i>a mother.</i>            |
| leathar, <i>leather.</i>               | cathair, <i>a city.</i>              |
| cathaoir, <i>a chair.</i>              | soitheach, <i>a vessel ; barrel.</i> |
| árthach, <i>a vessel, ship.</i>        | leathan, <i>broad.</i>               |
| díombuan, <i>transient,</i>            | ainbhíos, <i>ignorance,</i>          |
| eugcóir, <i>injustice,</i>             | teanga, <i>a tongue, language.</i>   |
| lán-tsásamh, <i>full-satisfaction.</i> | eudtrom, <i>light.</i>               |
| coimheasgar, <i>a conflict.</i>        | taoiseach, <i>a chieftain</i>        |

## EXERCISE V.

1. Tá an teanga ársa. 2. Samhradh breágh, teith.
3. Tá laoiġh-fheoil saor. 4. Leabhar agus fios, ceist agus ainbhfios. 5. Fear díomhaoin, damh dubh agus baoghal.
6. An galar buidhe. 7. Ath agus abha agus Samhradh breágh, teith. 8. Tá an abha leathan. 9. Sólás buan agus cuan breágh, fear agus íomháigh. 10. Tá an leabhar agus an mála eudtrom. 11. Tá an sglábhaidhe dall, agus tá sé fann, lag. 12. Tá an ceol ársa, agus tá sé breágh, binn. 13. Urlár cruaidh agus doras leathan. 14. Tá an talamh saor agus tá an cíos daor. 15. Cíos árd.
16. Fear agus capall, talamh agus cíos. 17. Arán saor. 18. Ughdar óg agus leabhar deas. 19. Tá ainbhfios ole. 20. Tá an sgian geur agus tá an sglábhaidhe umhal.
21. Gort a's giusta, siur a's máthair,  
Port a's cúram, dún a's láthair.
22. Tá 'n coinnleoir árd a's tá 'n mála mór,  
Tá 'n inghean breágh a's tá 'n folt tiugh, borra.

*Translation.*

1. The language is ancient. 2. A fine, warm Summer.
3. Veal is cheap. 4. A book and knowledge, a question and ignorance. 5. An idle man, a black ox and danger.
6. The yellow disease (*jaundice*.) 7. A ford and a river and a fine, warm Summer. 8. The river is wide. 9. Perpetual comfort and a fine harbor, a man and an image.
10. The book and the bag are light. 11. The laborer is blind (*or dull*), and he is weary and weak. 12. The music is ancient, and it is fine and melodious. 13. A hard floor and a wide door. 14. The land is cheap and the rent is dear. 15. High rent. 16. A man and a horse, land and rent. 17. Cheap bread. 18. A young author and a pretty book. 19. Ignorance is bad. 20. The knife is sharp and the workingman is humble.

## INITIAL ASPIRATION AND ECLIPSIS.

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### LESSON VI.

We have already seen that Gaelic words, when taken separately, have their initials radical: i. e., unaffected by aspiration or eclipsis. When, however, words are strung together in a sentence, they so affect one another that the initial consonants of some words are sometimes affected — aspirated or eclipsed — by the influence of other words immediately going before them. The words which are susceptible of having their initials affected in this manner are the NOUNS, ADJECTIVES, and VERBS; and the words which have the power of influencing them are the PARTICLES, that is, *the uninflectional element in the language*. For example, the possessive pronouns, singular, “mo,” *my*, “do,” *thy*, and “a,” *his*, cause aspiration of the initial consonant of the following noun; while their plural forms “ár,” *our*, “bhúr,” *your*, and “a,” *their*, cause eclipsis, as may be seen from the following: —

mo bhád, *my boat*.

do bhád, *thy boat*.

a bhád, *his boat*.

ár mbád, *our boat*.

bhúr mbád, *your boat*.

a mbád, *their boat*.

a bád, *her boat* (causes no change.)



From the foregoing it will be seen that a mutable consonant, when initial, is susceptible of assuming three distinct sounds, according to the nature of the particle that precedes and affects it. These are: (1) the radical sound, (2) a softer sound, called *eclipsis*, (3) a softer sound still, called *aspiration*.

This mutability of the initial consonant of a word, under the influence of a preceding and independent word, which forms the subject of the present lesson, is to be clearly distinguished from the change which a mutable consonant suffers when two words enter into composition, as exemplified in Lesson V.; and yet the modification of the consonant in both these instances is based on the same principle — that of *euphony*, or ease of utterance.

When two words are brought together in the formation of a compound term, we can easily see that, as both components of the term are closely connected, a principle of *euphony* — as also a principle of *differentiation* — requires that the initial consonant of the second word be affected, to enable both words to fuse together and become incorporated the more smoothly. We can easily see also that, by an extension of this rule, it will be made to include words which, though independent, are closely connected in a sentence. Now, as a particle, from its nature and office, is a word which, in many cases, is closely connected in thought and even in expression with the more prominent word to which it pertains: so much so, indeed, that both may be said to form constituent parts of a single term; it will not seem strange that certain particles, thus logically and grammatically connected with the words following them, should have the power of affecting the initials of these words, on the principle of *euphony* already referred to. So well was this fact understood by the ancient scribes, and so solicitous were they to impress

it on the mind of the reader that, in the manuscript works which they wrote, they usually incorporated the particles with the words following them. Such incorporated particles have now come to be called *Proclitics*, which they really are. In modern writings, it will be observed, of course, that the particles are never incorporated with the words following them, but are always written out analytically; notwithstanding that, however, the fact remains that they *are* proclitic: that is, that they are closely connected in thought and expression with the words whose initials they affect.

How far this affection of the initial consonants of independent words is prevalent in other languages, and how far it may be supposed to be a characteristic of language in general, may be now considered. The following extract from Prichard's *Eastern Origin of the Celtic Nations* (page 27), will bear some testimony on this point:—

“It is a habit common to many of the Indo-European languages to interchange certain letters according to rules founded originally on euphony, or on the facility of utterance; and from this circumstance arises the great capability which these languages possess, of composition, or the formation of compound words. The substitution of consonants of particular orders for their cognates, which takes place in Greek, in the composition of words, and in some other instances, is an example of this peculiarity.

“In Greek, in Latin, and in the German dialects, the mutation of consonants is confined to words brought together under very peculiar circumstances, as chiefly when they enter into the formation of compound terms, and it is scarcely observed in words which still remain distinct, and are merely constituent parts of sentences. Either the attention to euphony, and the ease of utterance, has not extended so far, or the purpose was attained by a change of collocation, the words themselves remaining unaltered. But in the Sanscrit language, words merely in sequence have an influence upon each other in the change of ter-

minations, and sometimes of initial letters, on the principle above alluded to."

Here we find, then, that the very phenomenon which we have been studying; namely, the euphonic changes of initial consonants of words in sequence, is also observable in Sanscrit; or, as Prichard expresses it, "in the Sanscrit language, words merely in sequence have an influence upon each other in the change of \* \* \* initial consonants." A phenomenon which is common to two languages so widely separated as Gaelic and Sanscrit cannot be said to be entirely foreign to the other members of the Aryan family of languages, notwithstanding Prichard's statement that "it is scarcely observed in Greek, in Latin and in the German dialects." For those who, like Prichard, doubt the existence of this phenomenon in any language other than Gaelic and Sanscrit, it may, possibly, be a sufficient refutation to show that instances of its occurrence in modern English are conspicuous enough. Initial consonant mutation, strange as it may seem, does indeed take place in English, but it is confined to the consonant *y* in a few words. The initial *y* in the word *you*, for example, when preceded by a monosyllable ending in a dental, is changed to *ch*; as may be heard in the following expressions: "*Don't you know*" (*pron. don' chou know*); "*I grant you that*" (*pron. I gran' chou that.*) etc. In the expression "*Last year*" (*pron. las' gear*), the initial *y* is changed to *g* (soft). From these examples we see that, in colloquial speech at least, the initial *y*, in English, is sometimes changed to *ch* and to *g* (soft), when preceded by a *monosyllable ending in a dental*. We see, too, that the final dental of the preceding word, which causes the change, is sunk in the pronunciation. So also in Gaelic, the rule is that Aspiration is caused by a monosyllabic word which originally ended in a *d*, and Eclipsis

is caused by a monosyllabic word which originally ended in an *n*.

Another good example of the "influence of words merely in sequence in the change of initial consonants," is furnished by the modern Greek. Scholars who are acquainted with the modern pronunciation of Greek, know that, in that language, the definite article *ten* (accusative) changes the initial *p* of the following noun into *b*, and changes the initial *t* into *d*. Thus *ten polin* is pronounced *ten bolin*, or, as it would be written according to the Gaelic system of eclipsis, *ten bpolin*; and *ten timen* is pronounced *ten dimen* (*ten dtimen*) etc.

These euphonic changes in Greek, and in every other modern language in which they occur, are never indicated in writing, but are merely colloquial. Even in ancient Gaelic, the modified sound of a consonant was never pointed out by any special mark in the written language, except in situations where that sound was permanent and organic.\*

Some persons have conjectured that, because of the absence of initial mutation in the written Gaelic of ancient times, the initial consonants must have been sounded as written, i. e., radical, in all cases where they are now either aspirated or eclipsed. But this idea is entirely erroneous, and deserves to be put on a par with that other idea, so often inculcated in times gone by, namely, that Aspiration and Eclipsis were phenomena peculiar to Gaelic alone! — were, in fact, linguistic blemishes, of which

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\*The transient sounds of Gaelic have become permanent in other languages. Thus the Gaelic "Baile," a habitation, which after an aspirating particle is, for the time being, pronounced "Vaile," is, in Latin, always written and pronounced "Villa," the radical *b* having altogether disappeared from the Latin word. It is only when the radical sound and the aspirate, transient sound are both held and exist side by side, as in Gaelic, that the phenomenon of consonant mutation is seen at its best,



our immaculate (?) English, and every other fashionable jorgan, contained not a single trace!! A more extensive knowledge of the Gaelic language, and of languages in general, will dispel many a false notion, hitherto entertained, even by reputable persons, and will enable the student to recognize the fact that, as the late Professor William Dwight Whitney, of Yale College, Connecticut, truly said, "every living and growing language has that within it which exemplifies the essential facts and principles belonging to all human speech."

The three cognate sounds which an initial mutable consonant is susceptible of assuming, in accordance with the laws of euphony, are exemplified in the following table:

| RADICAL. | ASPIRATED. | ECLIPSED. |
|----------|------------|-----------|
| b        | bh         | mb*       |
| c        | ch         | gc        |
| d        | dh         | nd        |
| f        | fh         | bhf       |
| g        | gh         | ng        |
| m        | mh         | —         |
| p        | ph         | bp        |
| s        | sh (ts)    | —         |
| t        | th         | dt        |

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\* When, in modern times, a radical consonant changes its sound, or becomes softened for the sake of euphony, the secondary sound it assumes belongs to the same organ of speech as the radical itself. In ancient times, when the number of distinct consonantal sounds produced by any given organ was more limited than at present, there existed a system of aspiration, or consonant mollification, according to which consonants belonging to two different organs of speech were interchangeable, just as the b and m, or the b and v are at present. Away back in prehistoric times, when the residents of certain localities of the European continent thought of aspirating, or softening, the radical c, they did not change it to ch—for that sound was then unknown—but they changed it to p. Hence, the Gaelic "cenn," a head, became in Welsh "pen," the Gaelic "mac," a son, became in Welsh "map," and the Gaelic "Iec," a flagstone, became in Latin "lap(is)." The prehistoric word "gia," food (Basque "ogua," Egyptian "oik"), became in Gael-

All consonants susceptible of initial aspiration are also susceptible of initial eclipsis, with the exception of m and s. The letter m is never eclipsed, and the apparent eclipsis of s, as seen in the combination ts, is but another kind of aspiration, and occurs only after *aspirating* particles which terminate in an n; as “aon bhean,” *any woman*; “aon tsórt,” *any sort* (not “aon shórt.”)†

There are three kinds of particles; viz., *Eclipsing Particles*, *Aspirating Particles*, and *Neutral Particles*. The influences which these have upon a word beginning with a vowel are set forth in the following three rules:—

I. ECLIPSING PARTICLES take n before an initial vowel; as “ár n-arán,” *our bread*; “bhúr n-arán,” *your bread*; “a n-arán,” *their bread*. [Here we have the reappearance of the n which originally ended the particle.] When the particle already ends in n (such as a compound particle made up of a preposition and the definite article, an), the eclipsing, or hyphenated n is not used; as “ar an úrlár,” *on the floor* (not “ar an n-úrlár.”) The same rule holds good when the following word begins with a d (the

ic “bia,” now written “biadh.” In all such cases, we find that the guttural (c or g) has become a labial (p, b, or m.)

In some localities, the guttural (c or g) was changed to a dental (t, d, or s). Thus, the Gaelic “cabhair,” *help*, became in Greek “timoria,” the Gaelic “oll-cu,” a wild-dog, modern “on-chu,” became in Spanish “onza” (Basque “otzoa,” Egyptian “ounsh,” English “ounce”), and the Gaelic “corcaca,” *marshes*, became in Latin “Corsica,” which is the name of a well known island in the Mediterranean, noted for its marshes.

The great characteristic of this system of prehistoric aspiration, as we may call it, is that it involves a law of compensation: so that for every primitive guttural that was changed to a labial or dental, there was a primitive labial or dental changed back to a guttural. While, for example, the primitive “crann,” a tree, became in Welsh “pren,” as a compensation for this, the primitive “plat,” a prince (Gaelic “flaith,” Assyrian “bulata,”) became in Welsh “culat,” modern “gwlad.” For modern instances of this law of compensation in language, see footnote page 56.

† Another peculiarity to be noted in connection with Aspirating Particles terminating in an n, is that they have no effect on a dental (t or d); as “aon duine,” *any man*, “aon teine,” *any fire*.

eclipsing letter of which is n); as “ag an doras,” *at the door* (not “ag an ndoras.”)

II. **ASPIRATING PARTICLES** have no influence upon a word beginning with a vowel; but

(1) If the final vowel of the particle is short, it is elided, to prevent a hiatus; as “m’ anam,” *my soul*; “d’ anam,” *thy soul*; “’anam,” *his soul* (for “a anam.”)

(2) If the final vowel of the particle is long, it is not elided, as the long vowel is, in itself, sufficient to prevent a hiatus (see foot-note, page 61); as “fá-úir na cille,” *under the clay (of) the churchyard*; “ró imthigh sé,” *he went* (*i. e., he did go, or, literally, did go he.*)

III. **NEUTRAL PARTICLES** take h before an initial vowel; as “a h-anam,” *her soul*; “na h-éigse,” *the poets*; “trí h-éisg,” *three fishes*; “le h-eirghe an lae,” *at the dawn of day* (*literally, with the rising of the day.*)

This threefold classification of the particles is not to be confounded with that twofold classification of the words of the language into particles and non-particles. The Gaelic language divides itself up, naturally, into two grand divisions; viz., (1) words that cause initial change and (2) words that suffer initial change. We have already stated, at the commencement of the present lesson, that the words which suffer initial change are the Nouns, Adjectives, and Verbs. Hence, therefore, if from the whole body of the language we take away the nouns, adjectives, and verbs, the remaining words will come under the head of *Particles*. For this reason, the ancient grammarians called the particles “iarmbeurlaidhe,” *i. e., remnant-words*. The whole number of particles, or *remnant-words*, in the language may be estimated as follows:

|              |     |
|--------------|-----|
| Articles     | 1.  |
| Pronouns     | 36. |
| Prepositions | 21. |

|                       |     |
|-----------------------|-----|
| Conjunctions          | 33. |
| Interjections         | 13. |
| Irregular adjectives* | 15. |
| Irregular adverbs     | 12. |
| Irregular verbs       | 12. |
| Verbal intensives     | 2.  |

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Total, 145.

Quite a number of these simple particles are compounded, producing what are called compound particles. The simple preposition, for instance, when it governs (precedes) a personal pronoun, will amalgamate with it, both producing a single word, called a prepositional pronoun; thus “ar tú,” *on thee*, becomes “ort,” “fá tú,” *under thee*, becomes “fút,” and “le tú,” *with thee*, becomes “leat,” as exemplified in the well known salutation “slán leat,” *farewell to (with) thee* (identical with the Hebrew *Shalom lekha*). There are more of those compound particles in Gaelic than in any other language.

Part II. of this treatise will be devoted exclusively to the particles, both simple and compound, and will give all the details in regard to the euphonic changes which they cause on the initial of the Noun, Adjective, or Verb.

Part III. will be devoted exclusively to the Noun, Adjective, and Verb, and will give all the details in regard to the *terminational* changes which these words undergo, generally included in the term *Etymology*.

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\* By the word Irregular, as applied to adjectives, we mean to distinguish a certain class of adjectives, including the ten numeral adjectives, which are always placed before the noun (causing aspiration and eclipsis), as distinguished from the generality of adjectives, whose natural position is after the noun; and by Irregular adverbs, we mean to distinguish a small class of adverbs not regularly formed or derived from adjectives: and which are sometimes, rather erroneously, called simple adverbs.



## VOCABULARY.

In the preceding vocabularies, we have given only nouns and adjectives, as by the aid of these alone it has been found possible to illustrate the orthography of the language. In the exercises following the vocabularies, we have admitted two particles—the conjunction “agus” and the irregular verb “ta” (present tense), as these were found to be elements necessary in the formation of a simple sentence. The present vocabulary contains a large proportion of particles; and the exercise following is intended to illustrate the use of those particles, to give further exemplification of the structure of the Gaelic sentence, and to form an easy transition between parts I. and II. of this treatise.

|                                  |                                       |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ag, <i>at.</i>                   | láidir, <i>strong.</i>                |
| le, <i>with.</i>                 | lá, <i>a day.</i>                     |
| bocht, <i>poor.</i>              | do,* <i>to ; for.</i>                 |
| go,† <i>that ; so that.</i>      | mac, <i>a son.</i>                    |
| maith, <i>good.</i>              | cuir, <i>put, place ; send.</i>       |
| tóg, <i>take ; raise.</i>        | fan, <i>stay, remain ; wait.</i>      |
| so, <i>this ; here.</i>          | O (ua), <i>a grandson.</i>            |
| sin, <i>that ; there.</i>        | Ní, <i>daughter.</i>                  |
| súd, <i>that ; yonder. ‡</i>     | acht, <i>but, except.</i>             |
| O Conaill, <i>O'Connell.</i>     | Mac Carthaigh, <i>Mac Carthy.</i>     |
| i,† (a), <i>in. §</i>            | a,* <i>O.   </i>                      |
| ann, <i>in ; there, therein.</i> | ann so, <i>here, in this (place.)</i> |
| ann sin, <i>then, there.</i>     | ann súd, <i>in yon (place.)</i>       |
| cá, <i>where ? ¶</i>             | óir, <i>for, because.</i>             |

\*Causes Aspiration.

†Causes Eclipsis.

‡The demonstrative pronouns “so,” “sin” “súd,” are enclitic, and the initial s takes the sound of the final consonant of the preceding word, according as that is broad or slender; as “an fear so,” this man (literally, the man here); “an callin so,” this girl. The demonstrative “súd” drops the s when written with a noun and retains it when written with a pronoun; “ta an fear ud gan feoirinn,” that man is without a farthing; “ta se súd bocht,” HE (lit. that individual) is poor.

§When the preposition “i” is compounded with another particle it becomes “a”; as “am cheann,” in my head [for “i mo cheann.”]

||The particle “a” is placed before all nouns in the Nominative of Address, which in Gaelic grammar is called the Vocative Case. When translating into English, it may be omitted, except on occasions of solemn invocation; as “a Dhia,” O God; “a Mhaighdean Mhuire,” O Virgin Mary.

¶The interrogative particle, “ca,” is rarely used independently, but is generally followed by a noun or pronoun, which again is followed by the

|                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| má * (dá),† if.**           | an,† whether.                |
| ní * (chá), not.††          | ná, not; don't (imperative.) |
| múirnín, a darling.         | mu-na, if-not, unless.       |
| beag, little.               | páiste, a child.             |
| do bhí, was, were, did-be.  | beidh, will-be, shall-be.    |
| do bhíodh, used-to-be.††    | a,* which, that, who.        |
| Eibhlín, Ellen.             | Caitilín, Kathleen.          |
| ar,* on.                    | fá,* (faoi), under.          |
| mar,* as, like.             | chó, so, as.                 |
| tré, through.               | go, to; until.               |
| cruth, shape, form.         | cruthuigh, create, shape.    |
| cuaird, a circuit, journey. | cuardaigh, search.           |
| Dia, God.                   | ó,* from; since.             |

relative "a," as "ca meid a ta ann," how much is there (lit., what amount that is there.) It amalgamates with the nouns "rud," a thing and "nos," a manner, producing the compounds "creud" (ca-rud) or "cad," what-thing, what, and "cionnas," (ca-nos) what-manner, how; as "cad a thug ann so thu,"? what brought you here [lit., what thing that brought you here.] It also amalgamates with the pronoun e, producing the compound "ce" (ca-e), what-individual, who; which again is incorporated with the relative "a," producing the compound "cea" (sometimes written cia); as "cea chuir ann so thu,"? who sent you here [lit., what-individual-that sent you here.]

\*\*The difference between "ma" and "da" is this: "Ma" is used with all tenses of the verb, and is followed by the Indicative Mood, and "da" is used only with the past tense, and is followed by the Subjunctive Mood; as "ma ta se," if it is; "ma do bhi se," if it was; — "da raibh se," if it were.

††These two forms of the negative are not now used side by side. While "cha" alone is the negative used in Ulster and in Scotland, "ní" alone is the negative used in Munster, Leinster, and Connacht. In ancient manuscripts, we find a compound, or double negative, "nocha," made up of ní and cha.

‡‡The past tense of the verb takes the intensive particle, "do," before it; as, "do bhi se," he was; "do chuir se," he put; "do chruthuigh se," he created. "do chuardaigh se," he searched. This intensive particle gives the same force to the verb as the English "did" in such emphatic expressions as "did go," "did come," "did create," and so forth.

There are two tenses expressing past time—the Past Definite and the Past Indefinite; both of which take the intensive "do"; but they differ in their terminations. The Past Definite is always the same as the root, or stem of the verb; as "do bhi se," he was; "do chuir se," he put; "do chruthuigh se," he created; and the Past Indefinite adds -adh or -odh; as "do bhíodh se," he used-to-be; "do chuireadh se," he used-to-put; "do chruthuightheadh se," he used-to-create.

In the ancient language, there were two intensive particles—one for each of these tenses—viz., 'do' and 'ro,' the former being used with the indefinite (or habitual) tense, and the latter with the definite.

## EXERCISE VI.

(To be Translated by the Student.)

1. Tá an lá breágh. 2. Do bhí an lá breágh. 3. Beidh an lá breágh. 4. Do bhí an fear láidir. 5. Tá an leabhar ar an mbórd. 6. Cuir an leabhar ar an mbórd. 7. Tóg an leabhar, a Chaitilín, agus cuir ar an mbórd é. 8. An fear a \* bhí breoite. 9. Ar n-athair a tá ar neamh. 10. An bhfuil an lá breágh? 11. Ní fhuil an lá breágh, acht tá se fuar. 12. O bharr go bun. 13. Ar an genoc;

When the significance of the verb is weakened by being used subjunctively, that is, by being used in situations where, in other languages—such as Latin, for instance—the Subjunctive Mood would be used, the intensive particle is omitted; as “deir se go mbiodh se,” he says that he used to be; “deir se go gcuireadh se,” he says that he used to put. In the present tense, which has no intensive, the verb has a special form ending in -ann; “deir se go gcuireann se,” he says that he puts. In the irregular verb, there is a special form not only for the present but also for the past tense; thus the secondary form of “ta” is “fuil,” and the secondary form of “do bhi” is “raibh”; as “deir se go bhfuil se,” he says that he is; “deir se go raibh se,” he says that he was. This secondary form of the tense is always preceded by one of a class of seven particles, for which reason it has been appropriately called the ENCLITIC form of the verb. It is sometimes purely subjunctive, sometimes purely indicative, according to the context.

The Past Definite of the regular verb has no ENCLITIC form, hence the intensive is not omitted; but, on the contrary, the old intensive, ‘ro,’ reappears and becomes incorporated with the preceding, or GOVERNING particle; as “deir se gur chuir se,” he says that he put [for: ‘deir se go ro chuir se.’]

\*The relative pronoun, “a,” is used for all kinds of antecedents, and always precedes the verb; as “an ghaoth a thig o’n Iar,” the wind that comes from the West. In the past tenses, the relative and the verbal intensive are not used together; the relative alone being generally used with the irregular verb and the intensive alone with the regular verb. But when the verb begins with a vowel or a silent consonant (fh), both the relative and intensive are used; as “a chuaidh síos go h-ifreann, a d’ eirigh an treas la o mharbhaibh a chuaidh suas ar neamh” [an Chre.]—who descended into hell, who arose the third day from the dead, who ascended into heaven; “an spruilleach do thuiteadh de bhord an duine shaidhbhir” [Lucas, XVI., 21.]—the crumbs that fell from the table of the rich man. Some irregular verbs resist the aspirating influence of the relative, and a few others omit it altogether. It is also elided before the regular verb when that takes the relative termination -as; as “oir an talamh shuigheas an fheartainn thig go minic air, agus do bheir luibheanna uaidh theidh i dtairbhe do’n droing shaothruigheas e, do gheibh se beannacht o Dhia” [Eabhruidheach, VI., 7.]—for the earth which absorbs the rain that comes often upon it, and which bears herbs that accrue to the profit of those who cultivate it, receives a blessing from God.

When the relative is governed (preceded) by a simple preposition, there

trés † an geroidhe. 14. Do chuir sé a lámh fán ‡ a cheann. 15. An mbeidh an lá so breágh? 16. Ní bheidh — beidh sé fiuch. 17. Cá bhfuil Caitilín? 18. Tá sí ann so. 19. An raibh tú ag an gearraig? 20. Ní raibh mé, acht do bhí Domhnall O Conaill ann. 21. Do chruthuigh Dia neamh agus talamh. 22. Muna bhfuil tú ceart, bí ciuin. 23. Ná bí cruaidh agus ná bí bog. 24. Tá Caitilín chó glic le h-Eibhlín. 25. Tá brón ar mo chroidhe, óir tá an páiste beag marbh. 26. Beannacht Dé len a h-anam.

Ide Ní Dhálaigh, an páiste beag fionn,  
D' fhuadaigh an bás í go h-árd os ár gcionn;  
D' fhág sí go tláith sinn, ag tál lucht na súl,  
A's tá sí go sásta i n-árus na ndúl.

is produced a compound particle, or prepositional relative, which has the power of causing elipsis, as also of taking the ENCLITIC verb; as “duine riagnalta ar a raibh eagla De” [Gníomhartha, X., 2.]—a devout man on whom was the fear of God. When the governing preposition ends in a vowel, the relative is elided, or rather assimilated with the vowel of the preposition, which is thereby increased in quantity; as “briathra Chríost, le gcomhair-light near duinn,” the words of Christ, by which we are counselled. Sometimes the vowel of the preposition is assimilated with the relative; as “an fear d’a dtug me mo leabhar,” the man to whom I gave my book. The preposition *i* is completely assimilated; as “an ait a bhfuil se,” the place where he is [for: ‘an ait i a bhfuil se,’ the place in which he is.] In Munster, the preposition ‘ann’ is generally used, for emphasis, instead of ‘i,’ especially when the antecedent of the relative is remote; as “na creutúirí do bhí ‘san fhairge, ann a raibh anam” [Taisbeanadh, VIII., 9.], the creatures that were in the sea, (and) in which was life. When the interrogative “ca” is used, the antecedent noun “ait” is not expressed, and the relative is assimilated with “ca”; as “ca a bhfuil se,” or “ca bhfuil se,” where is he [for: ‘ca h-ait i a bhfuil se,’ what place in which he is.]

The relative, “a,” is sometimes used as a compound relative (equivalent to that which, those who, those that) including both the antecedent and the relative. When thus used, it is governed by the preposition “de,” of, and the preceding noun must be taken singly, or in a partitive sense; as “acht nior thuig aon-neach d’a raibh i dtimcheall an bhuird creud fa ndubhairt se so ris” (Eoin, XIII., 29.)—but not one of (those) who were around the table understood why he said this; “gan cromadh ar mhín-sgoith d’a mbeí ‘san mhachaire, na ar bhilath d’a mbeí i lubhghort” (Dionbhrollach Cheiting)—without stooping to a (single) flower of (those) that are in the field, or a (single) blossom of (those) that are in the garden. When the preceding noun is not used singly or distributively, but collectively, and may be qualified by the adjective “gach,” used in the sense of ‘all’ or ‘every’ (not ‘each’), it is usually not expressed; as “a bhfuair bas ded’ chineadh,” all that died of your kin. (for: ‘gach aon d’a bhfuair bas,’ every one (all) of (those) who died, etc.)



## A RULE OF GAELIC ORTHOGRAPHY.

We have already seen that a consonant, in Gaelic, receives its sound from the vowel with which it is written. The consonant *s*, for example, in the words “seol,” “siol,” “siar,” is slender, because *followed* by a slender vowel (*i, e*); and in the words “clais,” “slis,” “dris,” it is also slender, because *preceded* by a slender vowel (*i*). A consonant may, therefore, be influenced by either the preceding or following vowel.

Now, if a consonant should stand between two vowels of different classes — one broad and the other slender — it would be difficult to decide whether it should be influenced by the preceding or the following vowel. Thus, in the word “drisog,” if the medial *s* is sounded with the following *o*, it will be broad (*drissogue*), and if sounded with the preceding *i*, it will be slender (*drishogue*.) Now, to obviate such difficulties as this, there is a rule of Gaelic Orthography, which requires that a medial consonant must stand between two vowels of the same class. So that, if the medial *s* in “drisog,” is slender, it must have a slender vowel *after* as well as before it; thus “driseog,” giving rise to the improper diphthong *eo*, instead of the single vowel *o*, in the second syllable. In short, the rule is that a single vowel should never be written for an improper diphthong; and *vice versa*. The old rule says:

“Cuir Caol le Caol agus Leathan le Leathan.”

† When any one of the seven prepositions ‘i,’ in, ‘ann,’ in, ‘go,’ to, ‘iar,’ after, ‘le,’ with, ‘tar,’ across, and ‘tre,’ through, is compounded with the definite article, ‘an,’ there is inserted between them the euphonic consonant *s*; which is attached to the preposition, when the latter is written out analytically. The preposition ‘i’ takes *s* also before the distributive pronoun ‘gach’; as “is gach aith,” in every place. The preposition ‘tri,’ a modern corrupt form of ‘tre,’ changes the *s* into *d*; as “trid an muir ruaidh,” through the Red Sea.

Some of these compound particles have the *n* of the article quiescent, in colloquial speech, when the following word begins with a consonant.

‡ When any one of the seven prepositions ‘i,’ in, ‘fa,’ under, ‘go,’ to, ‘iar,’ after, ‘le,’ with, ‘o,’ from, and ‘tre,’ through, is compounded with the possessive pronoun, of the third person, “a” (his, her, its, their), the euphonic *n* is inserted between them, which should always be attached to the preposition.



## POSTSCRIPT.

Sweet Tongue of our druids and bards of past ages !  
Sweet Tongue of our monarchs, our saints, and our sages !  
Sweet Tongue of our heroes and free-born sires,  
When we cease to preserve thee, our glory expires !

— *Anonymous.*

### *Translation.*

'Theanga mhillis, bhinn, aosta ár geléire 's ár ndraoitheadh !  
'Theanga mhillis ríogh Eireann na naomh a's na saoitheadh !  
'Theanga mhillis ár laoch mear, nár chlaon riamh le daoithe,  
Ar gelá-ne sin eugtha, má thréigean thu choidheche !

— SEAGHAN O DALAIGH.

As a small contribution to the renewed efforts which are being made in the United States, for the preservation of the Gaelic or Irish Language, the present treatise is offered to the public, with the conviction that it will receive from self-respecting Irishmen that encouragement which it undoubtedly deserves.

Part I., which is now put into the hands of the student, contains a good deal more than an exposition of Gaelic Orthography: it contains some important rules of Etymology, and even some principles of Comparative Philology. So that the reader, after studying the treatise carefully, *will be able to read and write the Irish Language with ease*, and will know a good deal about its affinities.

The Council respectfully request the individual reader to procure as many new subscribers as possible, as suitable premiums will be offered for circulating the work, and thereby spreading a knowledge of the national tongue.

Remittances are to be sent by Money Order or by Check and made payable to MR. RALPH J. BATEMAN, Manager, Gaelic School, 1151 Washington Street, Boston, Mass.

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